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March 2001

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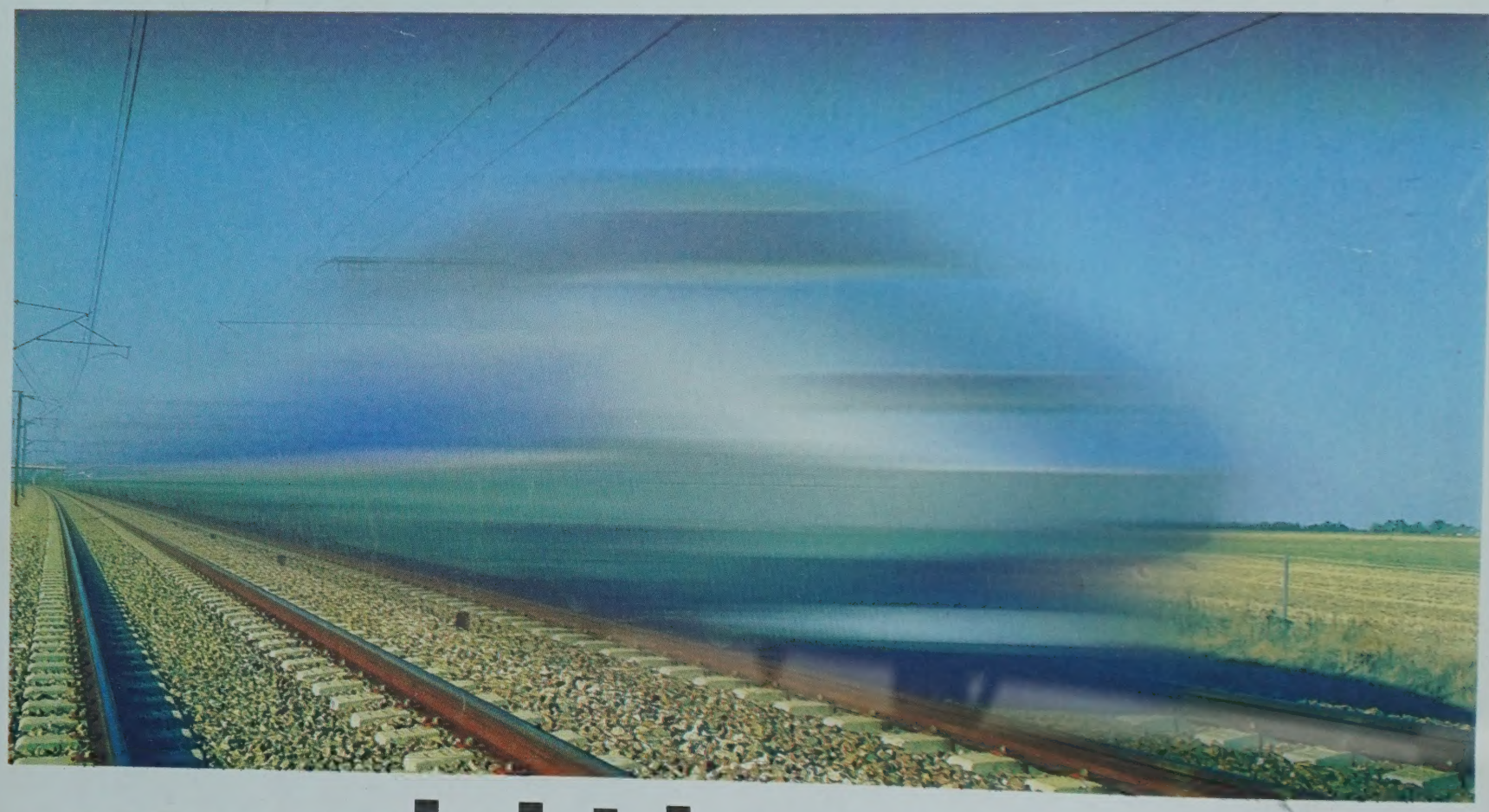

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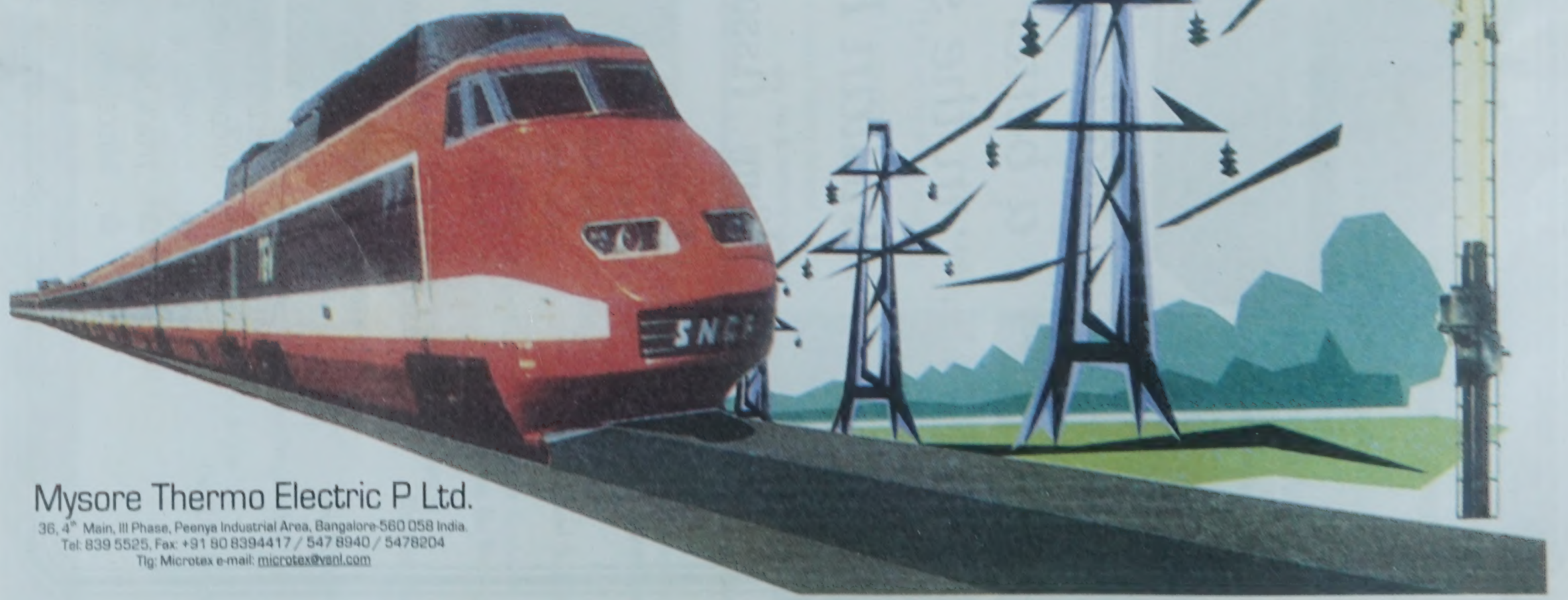

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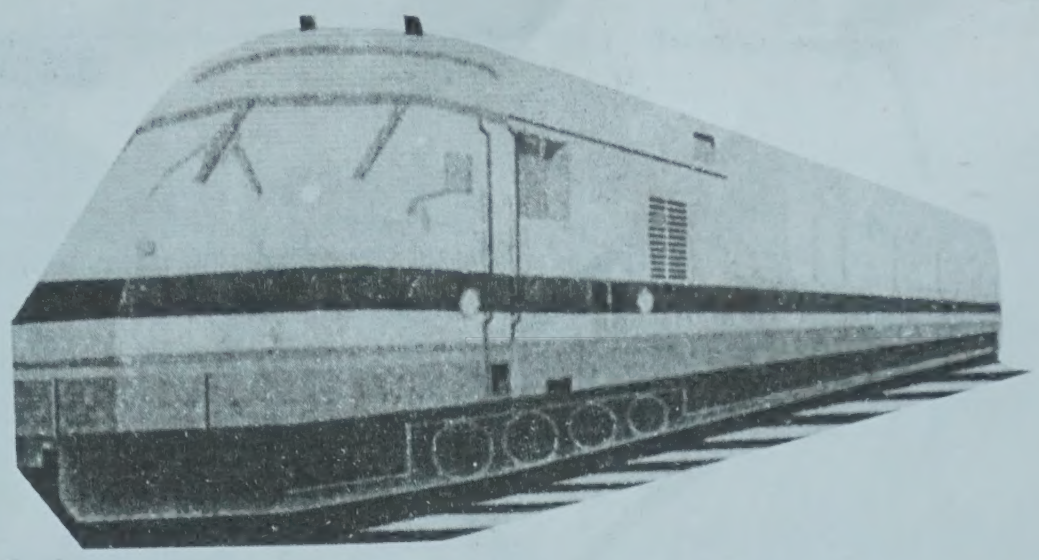

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Indian Railways

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March 2001

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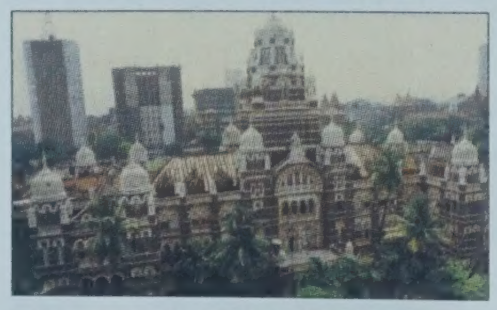

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Unless specifically mentioned, the articles and statements published in this journal do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board).

A Triumphant Foot Forward

The Railway Budget 2001-2002 presented by Railway Minister Kum. Mamata Banerjee on February 26 succeeds to strike a judicious balance between the expectations of the people and the compulsions of the Railways. It is at once an evidence of the Railway Minister's undaunted courage, dare and foresight. Refusing outright to add burden on the hard pressed rail passengers, Kum. Banerjee heroically disarmed the critics who were sitting on the fence to capitalise on public expense. A meagre three per cent increase in freight rate not touching the essential commodities aimed to meet the gap of Rs. 500 crore for the development of Railways, will have least impact on inflation. The Budget is thus commendably a user friendly exercise.

It is amusingly amazing as such to see the crocodile tears shed by the self-conscious sceptics who were irked at the dry crunch of illusory investments disregarding the historical fact that completion of the new projects announced with much fanfare has remained a pipe dream all these years. Those seriously concerned with the prosperity of railways are well aware that such developmental works where elegy preceded the inaugural eulogy have no meaning. They rightly complimented the Railway Minister for not resorting to public waste of resources. It would give one a jolt to reflect over the obnoxious phenomenon that the new line projects of no less than Rs. 20,000 crore announced over the years are languishing in the construction shelves. Add to this the gauge conversion works costing about Rs. 9100 crore and the doubling projects worth anywhere round Rs. 3300 crore. These wailing ventures have been the pastime freaks for populist applause over the past five decades.

To add more to the list would be a cussed mockery of the whole show. "I have taken this bold decision," declared the Railway Minister quite fittingly "of not including any new line project in the next year's budget." Reminding that it had become inescapable in the long-term interests of the Indian Railways, she proposed exploration of "Ways and means to expeditiously complete the on-going projects." Notably, the new ways and means in sight are the utilisation of vacant railway land and the right of way for laying optical fibre cables. While the latter will yield Rs. 750 crore, commercial utilisation of railway land and air space will generate this year no less than Rs. 150 crore. A substantial quantum of fund can also be generated by austerity measures which as the Railway Minister indicated would be to the tune of Rs. 865 crore.

The Railway Minister has been soundly responsive to the vital needs of development; be it new lines, doublings or the gauge conversion projects in realistic terms. The allocation for the new lines has been increased by 45 per cent which also takes care of as many as 13 works on the on-going projects. Also determined to complete 7 gauge conversion projects, the Budget has addressed to the augmentation of capacity taking in its lap doubling projects of 300 kms beside 200 kms to be completed in the current fiancial year. Notably, despite limitations notwithstanding, the Budget has not compromised on the safety aspect for which an enhanced allocation has been made at Rs. 2050 crore marking an increase of nearly 26 per cent over the current year's outlay.

Curiously, there has been far too little appreciation of the Railways' service for social obligations for which the Railways are given no grants from any quarter whatsoever. In recent past, the network was hardly able to breathe after the huge losses in Orissa cyclone when the Gujarat earthquake laid heavy toll on the system. The Railways ran 49 trains for the quake victims beside providing numerous other assistance and the contribution of over Rs. 19 crore. In this context Prof. Madhu Dandavate, the former Finance Minister who was also earlier the Railway Minister, has rightly stressed, "The Indian Railways should not be forced to meet the social burden from their own revenues."

Worth noting is the fact that despite being saddled with such social obligation expenditure and no increase in the budgetary support, the Railway Minister did not make any cut in the plan outlay. She rather increased it by 11 per cent to Rs. 11090 crore. Seen in this perspective the Railway Budget 2001-2002 is a triumphant foot forward. It steps ahead on just where it should. ●

—Editor

Railway Budget 2001-2002

No Increase in Rail Fares
3% Increase in Freight Rates
Essential Commodities Again Exempted

FOR the second year in succession, Railway Minister Kum. Mamata Banerjee did not impose any burden on the rail travellers at the same time ensuring unaffected progress in the rehabilitation and the modernisation of the Railway network. Presenting the Railway Budget 2001-2002 in the Lok Sabha on February 26, Kum. Mamata Banerjee did not propose any hike in the passenger fare for any class. Even for the freight she announced, "I do not propose to increase the freight rates of essential commodities like edible salt, grains and pulses, sugar, fruits and vegetables, urea, edible oils, kerosene and LPG."

Pointing out that the increase in freight rates has some direct or indirect effect on the economy, the Railway Minister drew attention of the house to the fact that the Railways are also being subjected to similar inflationary pressure. Due to the pressures necessitating adjustment of freight rate by at least a small margin, the Railway Minister was constraint to increase the freight rate of all commodities except the essential ones by 3 per cent. She also said that concessional monthly season ticket scheme meant for the people below the poverty line which was approved last year will continue this year too. Referring to the freight loading in the current year, the Railway Minister pointed out the general recession in the economy which led to the downward trend in the infrastructure sector. Inspite of this, she underlined the efforts of the railways in freight loading.

The freight target for the next year (2001-2002) has been accordingly fixed at 500 million tonnes which is 25 million tonnes more than the 475 million tonnes of the current year.

The total working expenses projected in the year 2001-2002 are at Rs. 38,684 crore. Computed against the total traffic receipts of Rs. 39,439 crore, the net traffic receipts are worked out at Rs. 755 crore. The net miscellaneous receipts are estimated at Rs. 928 crore. This leads to Rs. 1683 crore of net revenue earning. The Railways have decided to pay Rs. 1352 crore of dividend during the

Railway Minister Kum. Mamata Banerjee giving last touches to the Railway Budget 2001-2002. Seen next to her is Shri Digvijay Singh, Minister of State for Railways.

budget year to the General Revenues. The balance Rs. 1000 crore of the dividend will be transferred to the deferred liability dividend account. With these projections the excess of receipts over the expenditure during 2001-2002 is reckoned at Rs. 331 crore. This falls short of plan requirements by Rs. 500 crore. The plan outlay for the year 2001-2002 has been fixed at Rs. 11,090 crore. The uncovered gap of Rs. 500 crore is therefore expected to be met with the additional mobilisation of the resources at nominal 3 per cent hike in the freight rates.

Following is the text of the speech of the Railway Minister Kum. Mamata Banerjee in the Lok Sabha on February 26:

"Mr Speaker, Sir,

I rise to present the Budget Estimates for the year 2001-2002 for the Indian Railways. At the outset, I would like to sincerely thank our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayeeji for his valued guidance in discharge of my ministerial responsibilities. I could count on his advice and encouraging direction whenever I approached him with any issue relating to Indian Railways. It is my proud privilege to present the second Railway Budget of the millennium and I would like to sincerely thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, and through you, all the Hon'ble Members of this august House for enabling me to do this.

Sir, last sixteen months have been a period of intense experiences for me. During this period, I have seen Indian Railways from close quarters. I have seen millions of Railway family members, working round the clock, to run more than 13,500 trains across 7000 stations everyday, cutting across almost all the States. I have seen Railways spontaneously rushing into the interiors of Orissa, Bengal and Gujarat with a helping hand when unfortunate natural calamities struck them. I have also seen Railways ferrying water and fodder to the drought

- **Freight Target : 500 million tonnes**
- **Plan Outlay : Rs. 11,090 crore (11 per cent increase)**
- **Budgetary Support : Rs. 3540 crore**
- **New Lines Target : Rs. 1015 crore (earlier year Rs. 702 crore)**
- **Track Renewal : Rs. 2050 crore (earlier year Rs. 1633 crore).**

hit states to save previous lives. Posterity will not forget the sight of hundreds of trains trailing into Allahabad, day after day, carrying millions of countrymen on the occasion of Mahakumbh. Sir, when our jawans and tanks are moving to the border areas and when foodgrains from Punjab and Haryana are going on our trains into the interiors of far flung states, I feel proud to be associated with Indian Railways as one of its family members. A railway compartment in our country represents, perhaps, the best example of a secular, united India, bringing about emotional, regional, cultural, linguistic and economic integration of our diverse society. With these experiences, Sir, I have developed a firm belief that just as water and air are crucial for existence of a human life, Railways are equally essential, for the life of the nation. This organisation, being the largest Railway system in the world under a single management, has enormous strength and potential.

Sir, amongst the transport systems world-wide, Rail mode is re-establishing itself. This resurgence is because Railways are six times greater energy efficient, and four times higher land use efficient mode of transport. Railways are, perhaps, the most environment friendly transport system, the world has ever known. With its huge network spanning over 63,000 route kilometres, Indian Railways are, in fact, engine of growth for the national economy. It is difficult to perceive growth of Indian economy without a corresponding growth in Railway infrastructure.

But, Sir, sadly, Indian Railways with all its inherent strengths and potentials has not received the attention it deserves from the nation. With the increase in population, expectations of the countrymen from this system, and the social responsibilities reposed on it, are continuously on the rise. On the contrary, the investments in this system have been almost continuously declining over the years. The capital support from the General Exchequer which reached a peak of 75 per cent in the Fifth Five Year Plan, fell to 42 per cent in the Seventh Five Year Plan and skidded to a low level of 18 per cent in the last two years of the Eighth Plan. To fill-in the gaps, Railways have been forced to resort to larger market borrowings with attendant huge burden of interest liability. This has inflicted long term damage to the otherwise healthy Railway finances. As a consequence, railways' share in freight movement has also dropped from 89 per cent in 1950-51 to about 40 per cent as of now.

Sir, Indian Railways are at cross roads today. We are facing the dilemma of realising our true identity, our objectives and goals. On the one hand, we have the social responsibility of being an affordable carrier of people and goods. On the other hand, we are often expected to play the role of a profitable commercial enterprise and, thus, fend for ourselves. I learn from many economists and experts that the answer lies in treating ourselves as 'cost centres' and 'profit centres'. Sir, the countrymen know that Railways have grown as a 'people-centric', 'society-centric' public utility. Sir, let us pause here for a moment and do some soul-searching. Are we a commercial enterprise only? Or are we a public utility? Or should we continue to play combined role in the larger interest of the public good? Sir, Indian Railways are not merely a transportation utility. They are a

dependable friend of the Indian people. And just as a friend in need is a friend indeed, the Railways have stood by our people in good as well as bad times.

Sir, Railway experts and economists have been criticising Railways for starting large number of projects with low or negative rate of return. Sir, I am neither an expert nor an economist. But as one of the common man in this country, I feel that Railways' existence is necessary to pave the way for development. Emphasising only high economic rate of return, will discourage any developmental initiative in far flung areas. Can we afford to do it, Sir? I expect that my Hon'ble colleagues will guide me in searching for an answer to this question.

Sir, there are large number of challenges which Railways face today. The dual roles of Railways as public utility and a commercial undertaking are at times conflicting while the sources for funding these two diverse activities are the same. Railways also do not receive compensation for social service obligations. Technological modernisation of Railways is critically required, but low investment over the last two decades has almost stopped this process. Unfortunately, the support from General Exchequer also has been taking a downward trend right from Fifth Plan till Eighth Plan, dropping from 75 per cent to 18 per cent. This is pushing railways on to borrowings at high rate of interest causing permanent damage to its finances. Internal resources of railways have also suffered a severe and permanent jolt immediately after implementation of Fifth Pay Commission recommendations. Railways have 16 lakh employees which is 40 per cent of the entire central government strength. In the coming year, pension alone is likely to cost Rs. 5,800 cr. which Railways have to bear themselves. Otherwise, Pension liabilities of other Government employees are borne by General Exchequer.

Sir, during my tenure, I have initiated several measures to meet these challenges within our limited means. For the first

Shri Ashok Kumar, Chairman, Railway Board addressing the news persons on Railway Budget at Rail Bhavan, New Delhi on February 26.

View of the audience.

time, Railways seriously started pursuing the non-traditional sources of revenue generation. However, developing new sources, which are non-traditional, and tapping them takes time. I had also launched a serious economy and austerity drive. Sir, the house is aware that this drive had yielded a saving of Rs. 850 cr. during previous year. For the current year also, the target in this regard is Rs. 865 cr. However, Sir, these measures are not adequate to meet the severest challenges. Some more steps are needed which I would like to outline below:

(i) For financing socially relevant projects and for running train operations to meet socially desirable ends, outright grants without dividend liability should be provided by the State. On the other hand, a special fund with a mix of seed contribution, borrowings and private sector participation should be created for funding remunerative and operationally required projects.

(ii) Railways need to develop market oriented and customer friendly outlook due to emerging competition within the transport sector.

(iii) Sir, the House is aware that much discussed recommendations of Railway Safety Review Committee chaired by Justice Khanna have evoked large support from Hon'ble members. But Railways are still awaiting the recommended one time grant for safety purposes.

(iv) There is urgent need to prioritize railway projects for speedy implementation. Cost-sharing of such prioritized projects with the State Governments, which has recently begun, should be further intensified. Sir, I would like to thank the State Govenments of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Karnataka who have already come forward in this direction. I wish other State Governments will also join these efforts.

(v) Railways have an enormous hidden wealth in the form of land, airspace etc. which needs to be unlocked to augment its resource base. Several non-traditional means of mobilising resources have been introduced recently. But this process needs to be taken forward in all seriousness.

Sir, these steps, I feel, will bring about major improvements in the Railway finances. I am happy to inform the House that this aspect is now being professionally looked into by an Advisory Committee under the chairmanship of Shri Sam Pitroda.

Brief Review of Financial Performance During 1999-2000

Sir, Hon'ble Members are aware that the year 1999-2000 was an extremely difficult year, as the Railways had to face the impact of recession on earnings coupled with soaring increase in the working expenses as a result of implementation of the Fifth Central Pay Commission. But, Sir, we have together fought this adverse situation with all the courage at our disposal.

I am happy to inform the House that due to concerted hard work of railway family members, we achieved an all-time record of incremental freight loading of 35 million tonnes, surpassing the target of 450 million tonnes by 6.42 million tonnes in the year 1999-2000. This was, indeed, a remarkable achievement despite the background of severe setback in the year before that. Even the passenger earnings registered an impressive growth of 12 per cent and surpassed the budgeted target by Rs. 132 cr.

As a post budgetary development, Railway finances came under stress due to upward revision of price of diesel oil as well as levy of an additional cess and revision of tariff by some of the State Electricity Boards. This coupled with damage caused to Railway property by Orissa cyclones put an additional burden of around Rs. 900 cr. on the system. Sir, we consciously chose not to shift this burden on to rail users. I am happy that we were able to absorb the entire burden ourselves.

Despite all these difficulties, gross earnings increased from Rs. 33,021 cr. in Revised Estimates to Rs. 33,125 cr. in the actuals. Total Working Expenses which stood at Rs. 30,909 cr. in the Revised Estimates were also contained at Rs. 30,844 cr. Pensionary liabilities, budgeted at Rs. 4094 cr. in the Revised Estimates finally came down to Rs. 4022 cr. The plan expenditure stood at Rs. 9057 cr. as against Rs. 8965 cr. in the Revised Estimates. The market borrowings however, were reduced from Rs. 3000 cr. in the Revised Estimates to Rs. 2919 cr.

Review of Financial Performance During the Current Year

Sir, the House will recall that a target of 475 million tonnes was fixed for loading of revenue earning freight traffic for the year 2000-01. Indian Railways have already loaded about 390 million tonnes of revenue earning freight traffic during the period from April, 2000 to January, 2001 which is 18.48 million tones more than the loading achieved in the corresponding period of last year. Keeping the trend in view, the freight-loading target of 475 million tonnes would definitely be achieved. In the current year, positive growth has been witnessed in loading of coal, iron ore for export, POL, iron and steel, cement and 'other goods'.

I am happy to inform the House that there has been a historically high growth in passenger earnings, which reached about Rs. 8552 cr. by end of January 2001. This marks an increase of Rs. 740 cr. over previous year's earnings during the corresponding period. Other Coaching and Sundry earnings also have been quite

encouraging compared to previous year's performance.

Non-traditional Sources of Earnings

Sir, the House would recall that the Railways had, for the first time, set for themselves the task of mobilising the resources from non-traditional sources such as leasing of 'right of way' for laying Optic Fibre Cables, commercial utilisation of land and air space and commercial publicity on rolling stock and station buildings. A target of Rs. 750 cr. was kept for 2000-01.

I am happy to inform the House that RailTel Corporation of India has already started functioning to build a nation-wide broad band and multimedia network by laying Optical Fibre Cable along 62,800 route kms. of railway track by utilising Railways' 'right of way'. The business plan of this Corporation as developed by professional consultants is now awaiting final approval of the Government. The Corporation will soon start its core activities after the business plan is finally approved by the Government. In the circumstances, although we had projected an income of Rs. 500 cr. from this Corporation in the current year, it is now expected that significant revenue flows will commence only during 2001-02. In view of the positive response and encouraging offers already received by RailTel Corporation both from within the country and outside, Railways propose to initiate other such ventures. For example, a separate IT company is contemplated to avail of the opportunities offered by e-commerce.

Commercial utilisation of Railway land/airspace has been identified as one of the valuable non-tariff options for raising additional resources. In my last budget speech, I had set a target of Rs. 150 cr. to be realised through railway land. I am happy to inform the House that 53 sites identified for this purpose are being developed through RITES and IRCON, which have been appointed as nodal agencies for executing these schemes.

New Member Traffic

R.K. Thoopal

Shri R.K. Thoopal took over as Member Traffic, Railway Board and ex-officio Secretary to the Government of India on February 28. He was earlier General Manager of South Eastern Railway since October 2000.

Born in 1942, Shri Thoopal graduated from Bombay University and joined the Indian Army in the Crops of Signals. He was Captain in Indian Army and was posted to Punjab Sector during 1965 war. After release from the army he joined Indian Railway Traffic Service through Civil Services Examination of 1964.

Shri Thoopal has worked in various important positions in the zonal railways which include Eastern, Central, South Central, Western and South Eastern Railways. He also had a stint in Railway Board.

Shri Thoopal was the Divisional Railway Manager of Ajmer and Ratlam Divisions. He was Chief Commercial Manager of Western and Central Railways. He also worked as Chief Operations Manager of South Eastern Railway and Western Railway. He was appointed Officer on Special Duty in the newly created West Central Railway, Jabalpur.

An Officer of varied experience, Shri Thoopal has specialisation in Operations, Commercial, Safety, Traffic Costing and Computerisation. He has authored as many as five project reports for Indian Railways. These reports are—

(1) Strategy for augmenting capacity on high density routes, (2) Multi-Skilling, (3) Impact of bulk movement on costs and pricing policy, (4) Passenger traffic and related amenities and (5) 'Vision 2010'.

A sum of Rs. 81 cr. has already been realised by end of December 2000 on this account. We hope to achieve our target by the end of the financial year.

A sum exceeding Rs. 30 cr. has been generated by way of commercial publicity and advertisements on stations and rolling stocks. This innovative measure was introduced for the first time by way of a non-traditional means of raising resources. Although the target of Rs. 100 cr. for the year may not be achieved, the breakthrough made in the very first year has inspired us to exploit this resource more and more with the help of professionals. In the next year, empowered groups both at national and zonal levels will enhance these activities taking professional help. A comprehensive and transparent policy package would be drawn up within a period of three months.

Safety

Sir, I fully share the concern of the House and the public about critical need for improvements on safety front.

The House is already aware that Justice Khanna Committee had concluded that for rehabilitation of railway assets for safety, there was a need for a grant of Rs. 15,000 cr. to be made available to Railways over a period of 5 to 7 years. As resources of this magnitude cannot be expected to be internally generated by the Railways, I was very much hopeful that a way would be found to meet this recommendation of the Committee. This has, however, not materialised. Sir, on this issue, I am sorry, my speech would be silver but my silence would be golden.

Sir, I would like to assure the House that within our limited means, Railways are committed to accord highest priority to safety Despite the financial constraint being faced by the Indian Railways, we are trying to ensure that the level of outlay on safety related works is maintained. Track renewal works must receive priority. I, therefore, propose to enhance the outlay for this crucial activity taking it to Rs. 2050 cr., marking an increase of almost 26 per cent over the revised outlay for the current year. Induction of modern technology into our signalling and telecommunicaiton system is equally important. This has the added benefit of progressively reducing dependence on human intervention, thus leading, to an improved safety environment. That is why, Sir, I have decided to enahance the outlay on signalling and telecom in the next financial year by as much as 25 per cent over the revised outlay in the current financial year. Sir, with these enhanced outlays, I am happy to inform the House that we are, indeed, making provision of amount exceeding Rs. 3000 cr. on safety heads. However, this allocation will only help us meet the current arisings and not the arrears for which additional funds would be required.

Sir, in order to ensure that safety requirements are strictly followed at all levels, I have already made the Chairman, Railway Board in charge of safety on Indian railways. This would facilitate better co-ordination on all safety related activities at the highest official level.

Security

Sir, the general perception is that the Railways are responsible for providing security to passengers and their belongings. But the fact remains that policing on the Railways is the responsibility of the State Governments. Unfortunately, the law and order situation in certain States has not been conducive to smooth working of rail operations.

Railways have now commenced a process of streamlining the functioning of RPF to make it more effective. The measures taken include modernisation of communications, security gadgets and weaponry, provision of adequate transportation, computerisation, upgrading of training facilities etc.

Sir, the House is aware that I had set up a High Level Task Force on security on Indian Railways. The Task Force has recently submitted its report, which is

Special Train for Teesta Tea Tourism Festival

THE Northeast Frontier Railway collaborated with the Tourism Department of the West Bengal State Government to promote rail tourism in the State and has run a special train on metre gauge as part of the Teesta-Tea Tourism Festival.

This was the first occasion when a major step had been taken to promote tourism in the area. Tourists from various parts of the country participated in the festival and enjoyed train ride on this scenic area.

The festival organisers have hired the special train to take tourists on a sight seeing tour of the scenic area. This has generated revenue worth about Rs. 1,28,000 for the Railways.

"I am happy to inform the House that we are, indeed, making provision of amount exceeding Rs. 3000 crore on safety heads. However, this allocation will only help us meet the current arisings and not the arrears."

under examination. Sir, the solution lies in either the State Governments becoming proactive in improving policing on railway systems. Alternatively, Sir, I seek the guidance of this House on how to grant more powers within the framework of the Constitution to RPF to provide adequate security cover to rail users.

Freight : New Initiatives

Sir, freight revenue constitutes two-thirds of our total revenues. In order to regain the freight market share which Railways have lost in recent decades and to take it to the level of 50 per cent in the current decade, I propose to initiate various measures in the next year. Some of the major steps proposed to be taken are :

(i) A comprehensive delegation of powers to the Zonal and Divisional Railways has been undertaken in order to sharpen our interface with the customers. General Managers have been authorised to devise appropriate marketing strategies at local level to capture additional freight traffic.

(ii) A 'Congested Route Development Charge' for those routes on Indian Railways which have become heavily saturated is being introduced to enable Indian Railways to plan traffic facility works to remove the bottlenecks.

(iii) Volume Discount Scheme is being continued for the third consecutive year.

(iv) Special lumpsum rates for movement in Merry-Go-Round (MGR) circuits over short stretches have been developed for attracting bulk movement of coal and minerals at pit-head Power Houses/Mines. This package will target short-lead bulk traffic for rail movement.

(v) Roll-on-Roll-off (RORO) packages which had been

Financial Commissioner, Railway Board Shri P. Rajagopalan presenting the cheque to Railway Minister Kum. Mamata Banerjee at Rail Bhavan, New Delhi on February 15.

Railways Contribute Additional Rs. One Crore for Gujarat Quake

THE Railway Minister Kum. Mamata Banerjee received three cheques totaling Rs. one crore ten lakh from three different railway organisations for relief and rehabilitation operations in Gujarat.

The Financial Commissioner of the Railway Board and the Chairman of the Indian Railway Finance Corporation Shri P. Rajagopalan presented a cheque of Rs. one crore as the contribution of the Indian Railway Finance Corporation for the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

Besides, two cheques of Rs. 5 lakh each were presented to the Minister by the Railway Women's Welfare Central Organisation and the Railway Board Sports Association. These were presented by Shri D.P. Tripathi, Secretary, Railway Board who is also the President of the Railway Board Sports Association and Smt. Madhur Narain, then Chairperson, Railway Women's Welfare Central Organisation (RWWCO) respectively. This contribution will benefit the earthquake-affected people of Gujarat through Railway Minister's Relief Fund.

The amount of Rs. 5 lakh by RWWCO was collected by the Organisation during a Musical Evening organised in the capital featuring the noted play back singer, Sudesh Bhosle and his troupe, while the other cheque by the Railway Board Sports Association was from the proceeds of the recently concluded All India Railway Tennis Championship held in New Delhi. Keeping in view the devastating earthquake in Gujarat where lakhs of people have suffered, Railway Board Sports Association drastically reduced all extravagant expenditure in organising the championship and mobilised extra income from advertisement in the souvenir brought out on the occasion.

Accepting the cheques the Railway Minister appreciated the spirit of compassion shown by the contributing organisations and their members and said that this shows that the entire nation is one in times of need. She also appreciated the hard work put in by the railwaymen in the relief and restoration work in Gujarat.

It may be recalled that the employees of Indian Railways and their production units have contributed Rs. 15 crore for earthquake relief work last month. In addition, the Railway Minister has already donated her six-month's salary for relief operations.

experimented on the Konkan Railway are now being extended to Ahmedabad-Nabha and Chennai-Sankrail (Kolkata) circuits.

(vi) Surplus railway land at stations and more than 1500 unutilised Goods Sheds at roadside stations are being offered for development of warehousing capacity and, thereby generate additional traffic on the railways on the one hand and supplement revenues on the other.

(vii) We want to modernise our freight operations by using the state-of-the-art technology for real time monitoring. In this direction, project for computerised monitoring of Freight Operations (FOIS) is expected to cover the entire network of Indian Railways by June 2001.

Passenger Amenities

I plan to give a major thrust to improvement in the passenger amenities at the Stations. I am happy to announce that the outlay for Passenger Amenities will be further increased by 39 per cent over the revised estimate to cover many new areas of improvement. Following steps are being initiated for this purpose:

(i) Ticket refunds are being fully computerised on all zonal Railways.

(ii) Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are being installed at various important stations and will be later used for issue of tickets also.

(iii) For providing quicker information to public, on-line train running position will be available through Cable TV/ Internet and on Cellular Phones by connecting National Train Enquiry System to these systems.

(iv) To reduce congestion on ticket counters, proposal to use internet kiosks for ticket retailing is under consideration.

(v) Computerised information on reservation availability status and train movement status will be available on all A class stations.

(vi) In our Customer Care Institute,

Budget at a Glance

(Rupees in crores)

Actuals 1990-00	Budget 2000-01	Description	Revised 2000-01	Budget 2001-2002
32938.81	36529.00	(a) Gross Traffic Receipts	35467.00	39939.00
25644.93	28115.00	(b) Ordinary Working Expenses	27815.00	30190.00
1670.00	2441.00	(c) Depreciation Reserve Fund	2170.75	2704.00
3529.06	4995.96	(d) Pension Fund	4951.85	5790.00
30843.99	35551.96	(e) Total Working expenses (b) + (c) + (d)	34937.60	38684.00
2094.82	977.04	(f) Net Traffic Receipts (a) - (c)	529.40	1255.00
640.85	314.65	(g) Net Miscellaneous Receipts	822.15	928.20
2735.67	1791.69	(h) Net Revenue (f) + (g)	1351.55	2183.20
1889.78	2115.38	(i) Dividend payment due to General Revenues	2083.57	2352.00
	1500.00	(j) Less Dividend deferred $	1500.00	1000.00
1889.78	615.38	(k) Total Dividend	583.57	1352.00
845.89	1176.31	(l) Excess/Shortfall (h) - (k)	767.98	831.20
496.99	831.00	(m) Appropriation to Railway Development Fund	49.99	511.00
		(n) Appropriation to Railway Safety Fund	..	302.77
348.90	345.31	(o) Appropriation to Capital Fund-Railways	717.99	17.43
93.3%	98.8%	(p) Operating Ratio	98.5%	98.8%
6.9%	4.2%	(q) Ratio of Net Revenue to Capital-at-Charge and Investment from Capital Fund	3.1%	4.7%

$ Transferred to Deferred Dividend Liability Account

various training programmes have been initiated to train the front-line staff for better customer service.

(vii) Top priority would be accorded to provision of drinking water, platform shelters, increasing the length of the platform to accommodate longest train, raising the platform heights and ensure adequate seating arrangements.

(viii) To improve sanitation at stations, a large number of 'Pay and Use' toilets will be provided and mechanised cleaning will be undertaken.

We have undertaken a large-scale exercise in modernisation of customer service by bringing up more and more stations as model stations. 210 stations have already been selected. I now propose to develop another 74 stations as model stations in the next year.

Sir, as a major step to provide access to computerised reservation facility, I have decided to include another 71 locations throughout the country within the ambit of computerised Passenger Reservation System (PRS). Hon'ble Members are aware that PRS facility is already available at 670 locations in the country.

In order to improve the quality of service in long distance trains and to provide better amenities to the travelling public, certain amenities on the lines of Rajdhani Express trains have been introduced on 30 trains.

Catering Services

Railways have formulated a New Catering Policy with a view to introducing a transparent system of award of licences through competitive bidding in case of major catering units. The policy also provides for 25 per cent reservation at the discretion of the General Managers, to the various disadvantaged categories in the allotment of catering licences of small catering units.

Indian Railways have initiated a number of steps to expand the scope of catering services both at stations and in trains.

Health

Sir, I am happy to announce that to facilitate prompt medical attention to the needy passengers, a computerised database containing the locations and details of non-railway medical facilities along the railway tracks throughout the country have already been compiled. This information is available on Railnet.

In pursuance of my budget speech of 2000-01, first aid boxes with wider range of medicines were provided in model stations and long distance trains. The training of front line staff is continuing.

It is proposed to expand the facilities and modernise the Railway Hospitals to provide cost effective high quality care to the Railway employees in Jagjivan Ram Hospital, Mumbai, Divisional Hospital, Jhansi, Railway Hospital, Perambur and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Hospital, Mumbai.

In order to provide better indoor medical facilities to the Metro Railway employees at Kolkata, one 30-bedded hospital is proposed to be set up at their Tollygunge outdoor clinic.

Tourism

Sir, I have given special attention to promote rail tourism. In my Budget speech last year, I had announced that a new "Palace on Wheels" type of train would be introduced between Maharashtra and Goa touching several places of tourist interest, as a joint effort between the Railways and the Govenment of Maharashtra. I am happy to inform the House that a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Railways and the Government of Maharashtra recently. All other arrangements to ensure the introduction of the train will be firmed up shortly.

I am also happy to announce that another proposal to run a tourist train for the pilgrimage tourism on Secunderabad-Dharmavaram (Puttaparthy)-Tirupati-Guntur-Nadikude-Secunderabad circuit in Andhra Pradesh is being considered. Andhra Pradesh Government has also proposed a Palace-on-Wheels type of

First train to Bangladesh - India and Bangladesh have recently restored rail link between the two countries. The first passenger train was flagged off by Kum. Mamata Banerjee, Minister of Railways.

train for which modalities are being discussed.

Sir, I am also happy to announce that the Government of Karnataka has proposed to jointly run a 'Palace-on-Wheel' type of train on 'Bangalore-Hospet-Hubli-Goa-Mangalore-Hassan-Mysore-Bangalore circuit. Modalities in this regard are being worked out.

Orissa Government has sent a proposal for running a steam safari train on a route attractive for local tourism. Modalities in this regard are being worked out. Railways will welcome such proposals of tourism interest from any other State Government.

The newly incorporated Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation has taken up a few important tasks, which are expected to facilitate tourism in a big way. The "Mata Vaishno Devi" package launched in November 2000 has been very popular with pilgrim tourists.

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway has been recognised as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. This greatly adds to the commitment of the Railways to maintain and preserve this unique piece of engineering skill for posterity. It is proposed to revamp and upgrade the infrastructure. We plan to run specially designed tourist packages in this area under the aegis of Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation.

Preserving Railways' history through the institutions of regional rail museums has been an important activity of Railways. Rail Museum for southern region is going to be completed shortly. Similarly, I am happy to announce that new Regional Rail Museums will be set up at Varanasi and at Malda on the eastern region.

Relief Measures

Sir, this year the country has witnessed a large number of natural calamities. Apart from the most recent and most devastating of them all i.e. earthquake in Gujarat, there have been floods in State of West Bengal, cyclonic rains in Andhra Pradesh and drought in Gujarat. As always, Railways have provided all possible assistance including free movement of fodder and water to various states in order to mitigate the sufferings. Railways have moved more than 300 rakes of fodder and around 20,000 wagons of water to the drought affected areas of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Orissa, free of charge.

As part of relief and rescue operations in Gujarat after the recent earthquake, 49 special trains were run to reach relief material and relatives to Gujarat and for evacuating the injured. Railways were the first to reach the interiors with a helping hand.

I am happy to inform the House that on behalf of the Railway family, a sum of Rs. 15 cr. has been contributed to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund for the victims of recent earthquake. Apart from this, various public sector undertakings of Railways have additionally contributed more than Rs. 3.58 cr.

Konkan Railway Corporation

Sir, I am glad to inform the House that the Konkan Railway Corporation has improved its operations and this year its earnings have increased by 30 per cent over the previous year. However, the earnings of the Corporation are just sufficient to meet its operating expenses. I would like to reassure the House that the Ministry will continue to help the Corporation not only in meeting with its debt servicing obligations but also to increase its revenue generation and realise its full potential.

Metropolitan Transport Projects

I am happy to inform the House that doubling of Belapur-Panvel line has been commissioned for commuter traffic from April 2000. Fifth line between Santacruz and Andheri as part of 5th line project between Santacruz and Borivali has also been commissioned. Work on balance portion between Andheri and Borivali is

Sam Pitroda

Sam Pitroda Heads Modernisation Panel

THE Railway Ministry has set up a three-Member Advisory Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Sam Pitroda to initiate a comprehensive process for modernisation of railway system and for launching a new initiative for resource mobilisation.

The other Members of the Committee will be Shri Dineshbhai Trivedi, Ex-Member of Parliament and Chairman, Railway Passenger Amenities Committee and Shri Shanti Narain, Former Member, Traffic, Railway Board.

The Committee has been asked to suggest ways and means for initiating comprehensive modernisation of Indian Railways with the application of appropriate technologies; suggest areas for resource mobilisation in various facets of railway functioning; and suggest ways and means for development of railway assets for revenue generation.

The Committee has been asked to submit its report within a period of six months.

also progressing well and is expected to be completed within the next financial year. Work on automatic signalling system between Virar-Dahanu Road is also likely to be completed within this financial year thereby increasing the line capacity on this section. New line of Thane-Turbhe-Nerul/ Vashi which will provide another commuter corridor in New Mumbai is also expected to be completed by March 2002 if the land acquisition in Thane area is expedited by the state government.

Projects of quadrupling of Borivali-Virar section and construction of 5th and 6th lines between Kurla and Thane are also progressing well.

Works on the projects for extension of Kolkata Metro Railway from Tollygunge to Garia, extension of Circular Railway from Princepghat to Majerhat and provision of connection with Circular Railway from Dum Dum to the airport as well as electrification of the existing Circular Railway from Tala to Princepghat are continuing. Dum Dum-Tala section on Circular Railway has already been electrified. Electrification of Ranaghat-Gede has also been completed and Ranaghat-Bongaon will be completed within this financial year. This will facilitate running of EMU services in these sections also. Electrification of Barasat-Hasanabad is also progressing satisfactorily.

I am further happy to announce that as an extension of Calcutta Circular Railway Project, a link is proposed to be established between Ultadanga and Rajarhat (Phase-I up to Lake Town) to connect Dum Dum Airport to Titagarh in the North and Dum Dum Airport to Garia in the south.

Hon'ble Members will be happy to know that the work of Phase II of Mass Rapid Transit System in Chennai from Tirumalai to Velacheri is progressing at a good pace. To ensure its timely completion requisite funds are being provided in the year 2001-02. Work on gauge conversion of Chennai Beach-Tambaram-Chengalpattu suburban section has also picked up speed and is progressing well.

Hon'ble Members will be happy to know that based on the proposal submitted by Government of Andhra Pradesh, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Government of Andhra Pradesh and Indian Railways for strengthening the existing suburban infrastructure and services in the city of Hyderabad and its suburbs for making certain sections in the city fit for commuter train operation.

Production Units

During 1999-2000, all the Production Units — Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, Diesel Locomotive Works, Varanasi, Integral Coach Factory, Chennai, Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala, Diesel Component Works, Patiala and Wheel & Axle Plant, Bangalore — have achieved their targets. I am happy to inform the Hon'ble Members that Rail Coach

New General Manager of RCF

Shri K.R. Govindarajan has assumed the charge of General Manager, Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala.

Holding Masters degree of Technology (Industrial Engineering) from Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, Shri Govindarajan was trained in Indian Railways and British Rail in Industrial Management, Railway Operations and Maintenance.

K. R. Govindarajan

Shri Govindarajan has worked on important posts on Indian Railways as Officer on Special Duty (Corporate Planning), Railway Board, Divisional Railway Manager, Chief Workshop Manager, Chief Rolling Stock Engineer, South Central Railway, Secunderabad, Chief Mechanical Engineer, Diesel Component Works, Patiala and Chief Mechanical Engineer, North Eastern Railway, Gorakhpur.

He brings with him 36 years of experience in various fields of Railway management, locomotives manufacture, operation and maintenance, quality management, electronic data processing and personnel management.

Shri Govindarajan was instrumental in planning and implementing manufacture of YDM-4 diesel locomotives at Diesel Locomotive Works, Varanasi. He immensely contributed in bringing up the Diesel Component Works, Patiala from nascent stage to a full capacity diesel component unit of Rs. 120 crore in just three years.

Shri Govindarajan was on deputation abroad as Senior Consultant for five years in Zimbabwe and Botswana in railway operations, maintenance and HRD management. Widely travelled abroad, Shri Govindarajan holds diploma in French language.

Factory, Kapurthala and Wheel & Axle Plant, Bangalore have received ISO-14001 Certification for 'Environmental Management Standards Systems'.

I am happy to inform the House that Rail Coach Factory (RCF), Kapurthala also bagged the prestigious "Golden Peacock Environment Management" Award in June 2000. 27 Coaches of the state-of-the-art LHB design, are slated for indigenous production during 2001-02. RCF has bagged orders for export of 72 MG bogies to Vietnam National Railways. Diesel Locomotive Works (DLW), Varanasi have bagged order for 12 BG diesel locomotives from Bangladesh Railways and Sri Lanka Railways during the current year.

Sir, I am glad to inform the House that Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) has manufactured a new WAP-7 locomotive named 'Navbharati', which can be used to haul 26 coach trains at a speed of 140 KM per hour. CLW is now attracting a large number of international enquiries. Delegations from Switzerland, Turkey and South Africa have visited CLW to explore the possibility of buying locomotives based on latest technology.

New Trains

The following new trains have been announced by Railway Minister Kum. Mamata Banerjee in the Railway Budget 2001-2002:

(i) New Delhi-Raipur-Bilaspur Weekly Rajdhani Express.
(ii) New Delhi-Ranchi-Hatia Weekly Rajdhani Express.
(iii) Bi-weekly Express between Gorakhpur and New Delhi.
(iv) Bangalore-Vasco Bi-weekly Express.
(v) Pune-Ernakulam Weekly Express via Londa and Madgaon.
(vi) Asansol-New Jalpaiguri Weekly Express.
(vii) Secunderabad-Dharmavaram Express.
(viii) Sealdah-New Jalpaiguri Bi-weekly Express.
(ix) Jaipur-Ernakulam Weekly Superfast Express.
(x) Dhanbad-Hatia Intercity Express.
(xi) Howrah-Yashwantpur (Bangalore) Bi-weekly Express.
(xii) Indore-Gandhinagar (Ahmedabad) Express.
(xiii) Howrah-Trivandrum-Nagercoil Weekly Express.
(xiv) Kurla-Bhubaneshwar (Via Sambalpur) Weekly Express.
(xv) Valsad-Patna Weekly Express serving Surat area.
(xvi) Haldia-Asansol Express.
(xvii) Jodhpur-Chennai Weekly Express.
(xviii) Solapur-Pune Intercity Express.
(xix) Jodhpur-Haridwar Link Express.
(xx) Palghat-Trivandrum Express.
(xxi) Bhubaneshwar-Palasa Intercity Service.
(xxii) Asansol-Jhajha-Amritsar Weekly Express.
(xxiii) Weekly Rajdhani Express to Secunderabad upon completion of New Terminal Works at Hazrat Nizamuddin.
(xxiv) Rampurhat-Howrah Intercity Express.

RDSO

The functioning of the Research Designs & Standards Organisation (RDSO) is the pioneering R&D wing of the Indian Railways has been thoroughly reviewed in the current year in pursuance of my budget commitment. Several steps are being initiated to improve the performance of this organisation.

Public Sector Undertaking

Hon'ble Members will be happy to know that the performance of the public Sector Undertakings has been satisfactory during the year 1999-2000. In 1999-2000, IRCON International Ltd. had a turnover of Rs. 538 cr. and earned a net profit of Rs. 47 cr. It paid a dividend of Rs. 11.38 cr. Rail India Technical and Economic Services (RITES) achieved the highest ever turnover of Rs. 172 cr. during the year 1999-2000, recording a net profit of Rs. 16 cr. and paid a dividend of Rs. 3.20 cr.

Container Corporation of India Ltd. (CONCOR) had a turnover of Rs 832 cr. earning a profit of Rs. 178 cr. and paid Rs. 36 cr. as dividend. Indian Railway Finance Corporation earned a net profit of Rs. 301 cr. It mobilised a total of Rs. 2836 cr. from market in 1999-2000 to supplement the plan resources of Indian Railways. It paid a dividend of Rs. 65 cr.

Annual Plan 2001-02

Sir, when I sat down to compile budget estimates for 2001-02, I was certain that there will be some growth in the Budgetary Support from the General Exchequer. I was also hopeful that to tide over the safety related requirements, a separate grant would be available. However, none of these materialised. But, Sir, I am happy to announce that even with all these constraints, we have been able to keep the Plan outlay for 2001-02 at Rs. 11,090 cr, which is 11 per cent higher than the revised estimates of the current year. Capital support from the General Exchequer continues to be Rs. 3540 cr, as in the current year

It is proposed to go in for market borrowings to the extent of Rs. 4000 cr. The balance of Rs. 3550 cr. is being met through a combination of conventional sources and non-traditional sources of revenue. We are also relying on clearance of a portion of the Railways' dues from powerhouses. Traffic outstandings, a large part of which is powerhouse dues have touched a new height of Rs. 3027 cr. as on 31st December 2000. The target set for clearance in the coming year is Rs. 750 cr. As part of this, we expect that outstanding dues of at least Rs. 500 cr. from Badarpur Thermal Power Station would be realised by us in the next year, as promised by the then Power Minister last year.

Sir, in the current year, we had received a budgetary support of Rs. 3540 cr. which was about Rs. 1000 cr. higher than the year 1999-2000. Simultaneously, Government had also agreed for a dividend deferment of Rs. 1500 cr, so that our net payout of dividend was reduced to only Rs. 615 cr. Next year, Sir, there has been no growth of Budgetary Support while the Railways will also have to pay Rs. 1352 cr. to the General Exchequer by way of dividend, as the dividend deferral permitted is reduced to Rs. 1000 cr. only.

Sir, while safety continues to be our core focus in Annual Plan 2001-02, I have also decided to give major thrust to completion of new line projects which are pending for long time. Safety is being further strengthened with the allocation for Track Renewals being enhanced from Rs. 1663 cr. in the Revised Estimates to Rs. 2050 cr., making an increase of 26 per cent. In our continuing drive to improve user services, allocation for Passenger Amenities is going up to Rs. 200 cr. marking an increase of 39 per cent over the Revised Estimates for the current year.

Austerity is a major area engaging my concern. It would be recollected that in the previous year, austerity and economy drive had resulted in net saving of Rs. 850 cr. This year again, the target for savings through economy and austerity measures has been set at Rs. 865 cr. I would like to assure the House that in the next year also, austerity and economy will receive high priority.

New Trains

Sir, throughout the year, I have been receiving volumes of requests from the people at large and also from Hon'ble Members of Parliament who represent them, on starting new trains and increasing frequencies, extensions etc. Sir, you will surely agree that it is very difficult to satisfy everybody. But I do appreciate that in view of our increasing population, these are genuine requirements and hence the expectations. After taking into account the demand, availability of infrastructure, availability of adequate maintenance to ensure safety, impact on freight traffic etc., I am happy to introduce the new trains services.

I have been receiving a large number of appeals from the people from different parts of the country requesting for augmenting services available to second class travelling passengers on long distance routes. Keeping these in view, I am happy to announce that from the next year, I propose to introduce "Matribhumi" Express trains to be run during peak rush season with only second class and second class sleeper coaches, on the following routes:–

(i) Delhi-Jammu
(ii) Howrah-Delhi
(iii) Howrah-Dehradun
(iv) Delhi-Barauni via Lucknow
(v) Hyderabad-Bangalore
(vi) Mumbai-Gorakhpur
(vii) Mumbai-Varanasi

This will be my humble effort to help reduce the difficulties faced by common passengers on long distance routes. Depending on the utilisation of these services, their continuity will also be considered.

Increase in Frequency

(i) Sealdah-New Delhi Rajdhani Express from 2 days to 4 days a week.
(ii) Gorakhpur-Dehradun Express from 2 days to 3 days a week.
(iii) Rajkot-Ernakulam Express from one to 2 days and extension upto Okha.
(iv) Jabalpur-Rajkot Express from 2 days to 4 days by extending Rajkot-Bhopal Express to Jabalpur on 2 days.
(v) Sealdah-Darbhanga Ganga Sagar Express from 4 days to daily.
(vi) Vishakhapatnam-Bilaspur Express from 4 days to daily and extension upto Korba.

Medical Relief Vans Rushed to Gujarat

The Railways ran four special trains from Ahmedabad on February 1 to evacuate the earthquake victims and their relatives from the affected areas. These trains went to Howrah, Muzaffarpur (Bihar), Mumbai Central and Delhi.

In addition, a special goods train, carrying 30 earth moving machines including 18 bull-dozers, also left Delhi Cantt. Station on February 1 for the affected areas of Gujarat. These machines were provided by the Government of the National Capital Region of Delhi.

With a view to augment the medical relief efforts, the Railways rushed three medical relief vans fully equipped with medicines, equipment and a team each of medical and para-medical personnel to Gandhidham and nearby areas. These originated from Vadodara, Patel-Nagar (Delhi) and Nagpur.

(vii) Secunderabad-Rajkot Express from weekly to 2 days.
(viii) Nizamuddin-Bilaspur Gondwana Express from 3 days to 5 days by extending Nizamuddin Nagpur Express to Bilaspur.
(ix) Indore-Jaipur Express from weekly to 2 days.

Extensions

(i) Surat-Patna Bi-weekly Express from Patna upto Bhagalpur.
(ii) Pune-Varanasi Express to Darbhanga on 1 day.
(iii) New Delhi Guwahati Rajdhani Bi-weekly Express to Dibrugarh Town from one day to two days.
(iv) Chennai-Guwahati Bi-weekly Express to Dibrugarh Town on one day.
(v) Jodhpur-Jaipur Intercity Express to Sawai Madhopur.
(vi) Guwahati-Lumding Express to Dimapur.
(vii) Kacheguda-Palasa Express to Bhubaneshwar.
(viii) Jodhpur-Jammu Tawi Express to Ahmedabad.
(ix) Howrah-Gorakhpur weekly Express via Barauni, Ballia and Indara to provide a direct service between Ballia and Howrah.

Service introduced/to be introduced on completion of Gauge Conversion/New Lines/Restoration

(i) Upon completion of Peddapally-Karimnagar New Line, two pairs of passenger services have just been introduced from 14th February 2001.
(ii) Following services will be introduced on the recently completed Gandhidham-Bhuj Gauge Conversion.
a) Extension of Mumbai-Gandhidham Kutch Express to Bhuj.
b) Extension of Bareilly-Gandhidham Bi-weekly Express to Bhuj.

Shri Digvijay Singh, Minister of State for Railways handing over the cheque of Rs. 1 crore to Dr. K. Padmanabhan, Director, IIT, Kanpur for setting up a Railway Technology Cell.

Railway Technology Cell at IIT Kanpur

Shri Digvijay Singh Minister of State for Railways handed over a cheque of Rs. 1 crore to Dr. K. Padmanabhan, Director, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, on February 8 as Endowment fund for setting up a Railway Technology Cell.

Earlier on January 4, Shri Hari Mohan Director General, Research Designs and Standards Organisation, Lucknow and Dr. K. Padmanabhan, signed a Memorandum of Understanding between Ministry of Railways and IIT, Kanpur for setting up the above cell. This Cell will enable RDSO to have benefits of academic inputs from IIT, Kanpur in two specific areas for solving technological problems as well as for updating technology.

The Technology Cell will conduct R&D activities in the areas of Geo-Technical Engineering with special reference to Formation Engineering and Bogie Design in Mechanical Engineering. In the area of Geo-Technical Engineering, to start with, the design of formations and rock cutting in hilly terrain have been identified for study. These studies are expected to optimize design and to improve safety in the areas of unstable formations and rock cuttings.

Similarly under second area finite element modelling will be done by Cell to study the impact on wheels under coaches & wagons to identify weak areas and to optimise wheel design under extreme service conditions.

The MoU will strengthen and develop the link between Indian Railways and IIT, Kanpur. Earlier in a similar initiative aimed at building bonds to tap the knowledge available in institutions of advanced learning, Ministry of Railways had set up two chairs in the areas of "Rail Vehicle dynamic" and "Bridge Engineering" at University of Roorkee. ●

c) Extension of Pune-Gandhidham Weekly Express to Bhuj.
d) Two pairs of passenger services

(iii) On the recently restored metre-gauge line between New Mal Junction and Changrabandha, one pair passenger service will be introduced between Siliguri and Changrabandha via New Mal junction.
(iv) One pair of passenger service will be introduced between Eklakhi and Gazol and extended upto Balurghat upon completion of the new line.
(v) An express train from Howrah to Digha will be introduced on completion of the new line. In the interim period a DMU service will be run on the 16-kilometre completed portion between Tamluk and Bajkul.
(vi) Two pairs of broad gauge service will be introduced upon completion of gauge conversion of Pandharpur-Kurduwadi section.

MEMU/EMU Service

(i) Kazipet-Dornakal-Vijayawada
(ii) Purulia-Adra
(iii) Bilaspur-Nagpur
(iv) Kanpur-Shikohabad
(v) Bilaspur-Raigarh
(vi) Bally-Bandel (2 pairs)

DMU Service

(i) Kharagpur-Jaleshwar-Bhubaneshwar
(ii) Jalandhar-Hoshiarpur
(iii) Kotkapura-Fazilka
(iv) Samastipur-Darbhanga

New Lines

Sir, The House is aware that Railways have a large shelf of new line projects costing about Rs. 20,000 cr., of Gauge Conversion projects costing about Rs. 9100 cr, and of Doubling projects amounting to Rs. 3300 cr. which have been duly sanctioned by the Parliament over last five decades and are awaiting completion. After having seen the implementation for last one year, I have reached the conclusion that adding new projects to already sanctioned large shelf of on-going projects will only aggravate the problem. Therefore, I have taken this bold decision of not including any new line project in the next year's budget. I am afraid this may disappoint many of my Hon'ble colleagues here. But, Sir, in the long-term interests of Indian Railways I feel that this has become inescapable.

I further propose that ways and means must be found to expeditiously complete the on-going projects. Sir, that is why, I have decided to increase the investment in new line projects in the next year by as much as 45 per cent in comparison to the revised estimates of the current year. This increase, amounting to Rs. 312 cr, will not only facilitate general speeding up of new line implementation, but will also result in completion of the long-pending projects.

On-going new lines, which have either been completed recently or would be completed before March 2001 are:

(i) Puttaparthi-Penukonda section of Dharmavaram-Penukonda project.
(ii) Kashinagar-Kakdweep section of Lakshmikantapur-Namkhana project.
(iii) Kapadvanj-Modasa project.
(iv) Eklakhi-Gazol section of Eklakhi-Balurghat project.
(v) Jaruri-Banspani section of Daitari-Banspani project.
(vi) Bargachia-Munshirhat section of Howrah-Amta project.
(vii) Tamluk-Bajkul section of Tamluk-Digha line.

The new lines targeted to be completed in 2001-02 are:

(i) Gazol-Buniadpur of Eklakhi-Balurghat project.
(ii) Dharmavaram-Penukonda, completing the Dharmavaram-Penukonda project.
(iii) Dewas-Maksi new line section.
(iv) Bajkul to Digha of Tamluk-Digha project.

Gauge Conversion

The sections of which gauge conversion has either been completed or would be completed before March, 2001 are:

(i) Nonera-Seoni section of Guna-Etawah project
(ii) Raxaul-Birganj section
(iii) Gandhidham-Bhuj section

During the year 2001-02, Railways plan to complete the gauge conversion of the following sections:

(i) Seoni-Bhind
(ii) Amguri-Tuli
(iii) Makum-Dangri
(iv) Laxmanthirtha bridge
(v) Gooty-Pendakallu
(vi) Dhrangadara-Kuda
(vii) Wankaner-Morbi

Doubling

During the current year about 200 kms. of doubling would be completed, while in the next financial year a target of 300 kms. has been proposed. Sir, keeping in view the critical need to augment line capacity in certain saturated sections, you will be happy to know that the following new doubling works are being included in the budget.

(i) Ernakulam-Mulanturutti section on Ernakulam-Kottayam-Kayankulam line.
(ii) Bandel-Jirat section on Bandel-Katwa line.
(iii) Baruipur to Magraghat.
(iv) Harishchandrapur-Kumarganj section on Malda-Kumedpur line.
(v) Gooty-Renigunta section-Doubling of remaining single line sections.

Sir, it gives me pleasure to inform the House that we have decided to extend the following works as part of some of the on-going projects:

(i) Extension of Sultanganj-Deogarh new line project with a new link

from Banka to Barahat.

(ii) Extension of BDR gauge conversion project by a new link from Bowai-Chandi to Khana to connect Midnapur, Bankura and Purulia.

(iii) Extension of Mansi-Saharsa gauge conversion project upto Dauram-Madhepur.

(iv) Gauge conversion from Krishnanagar-Shantipur as an extension to the sanctioned doubling from Kalinarayanpur to Krishnanagar.

(v) Extension of Fatua-Islampur-Dhaniawan-Biharsharif new railway line project to Barbhigha.

(vi) Extension of sanctioned doubling project from Kalinarayanpur to Krishnanagar by providing a new line from Krishnanagar to Charatala on the Krishnanagar-Karimpur.

(vii) Extension to Rajkot-Veraval GC project by taking up gauge conversion from Wansjalia to Jetalsar.

(viii) Extension of Eklakhi-Balurghat project by a new link from Gazol to Itahar as Phase-I of Gazol-Raiganj.

(ix) Extension of Rewari-Sadulpur gauge conversion project to Hissar.

(x) Extension of Kanpur-Mathura-Kasganj-Bareilly gauge conversion project to Lalkuan.

(xi) Extension of Lumding-Badarpur-Silchar gauge conversion project from Badarpur to Baraigram.

(xii) Extension of sanctioned GC from Ajmer-Chhitaurgarh-Udaipur project to Umra.

(xiii) New line from Banka-Bhitiah Road as extension to Sultanganj-Deogarh new line project.

Railway Minister Kum. Mamata Banerjee recently inspected the production work of electric locomotives at Chittaranjan Locomotive Works. She inaugurated a new WAP-7 locomotive, Navbharati on February 12. In the picture she is seen on the door of the locomotive after inauguration.

Considering the long standing demand of the people of Murshidabad and the need for development in this area, I am happy to announce that restoration work of Nasipur (Azimganj)-Jiaganj Railway line will be taken up during the year 2001-2002. Separately a survey work for construction of a bridge over Bhagirathi to connect these two will also be undertaken.

Restoration of Teesta Valley narrow gauge line from Sevok to Gillikhola has been a long standing demand of the people of Sikkim and North Bengal. I have also dcided to take up the restoration of this important railway line during the year 2001-2002.

Another significant rail link needing urgent restoration is Mogra-Tarakeshwar line. This also has been a long standing demand of the people and accordingly, I have decided to start the work on this restoration in 2001-2002.

Sir, it would be recollected that in the last budget I had announced a new line project for facilitating better connectivity of North Eastern states. This New Moinaguri-Jogighopa line will be routed through Changrabandha to facilitate better communication links with neighbouring states.

Surveys

On the basis of requests received from the Hon'ble Members and State Governments, I have decided to take up several surveys during the next financial year. These are:

New Line Surveys

(i) Bhagirathi Bridge to connect Nasipur and Jiaganj Railway line

(ii) Donakonda to Vedareva

(iii) Mysore to Mangalore via Madikere

(iv) Latur Road to Mudkhed
(v) Ferozpur Cantt. to Taran Taran
(vi) Halem to Itanagar
(vii) Kharghoda to Santalpur
(viii) Bulb line at Shoranur
(ix) Rotegaon to Punthamba
(x) Sahnewal to Ladowal
(xi) Madurai to Tuticorin
(xii) Vaikam to Vaikam Road
(xiii) Kumbhakonam to Namakal via Jayakondam, Ariyadur, Perambdur and Thuraiyur
(xiv) Shahganj to Amethi via Sultanpur
(xv) Kazipet to Nalgonda
(xvi) Jiribam-Imphal
(xvii) Jhajha to Giridih via Sonuchakai
(xviii) Updating survey for Ernakulam-Punalur-Trivandrum
(xix) Jaypore-Malkangiri
(xx) Howrah-Sealdah 3rd line between Belangar-Bally and additional loop at Dumdum, Baranagar and Bally
(xxi) Budge Budge to Uluberia including a rail cum road bridge
(xxii) 2nd coaching terminal at Trivandrum
(xxiii) Byepass at Bandel and Naihati
(xxiv) Ranjitpura to Yeshwantnagar
(xxv) Development of infrastructure in Kakinada area
(xxvi) Thanjavur to Chennai Egmore via Adiyalur

Gauge Conversion Surveys

Virudnagar to Manamadurai

Doubling Surveys

(i) Ujjain to Indore
(ii) Patratu Chandil via Barkhakana
(iii) Gooty-Renugunta section of remaining single line section

Railway Electrification

In the current year, electrification of 425 route kilometres is envisaged and the following sections are planned to be completed before March 2001:

(i) Sirhind-Nangaldam-Una
(ii) Ranaghat-Gede
(iii) Ranaghat-Bongaon

Some of the important routes to be completed in the next year are:

(i) East Coast line from Vishakhapatnam to Kharagpur. With this, the entire Calcutta-Chennai route will stand electrified.
(ii) Main line of Eastern Railway, (Sitarampur-Mughalsarai) providing alternative electrified route on Asansol-Mughalsarai section.
(iii) Udhna-Jalgaon section linking two important electrified main trunk routes of Delhi-Mumbai via. Western and Central Railways will be electrified.

Industrial Relations & Staff Amenities

Railways have a large human resource base. There is need to further enhance their skills by using modern tools and techniques of the 21st century along with modern management concepts. There is a need to maintain a cordial relationship between the workers and the management in a large enterprise like Indian Railways. Industrial Relations over Indian Railways remained peaceful and cordial during the year. The grievance redressal machinery under PNM and JCM schemes functioned satisfactorily at all levels.

Sir, I am happy to announce that I propose to enhance the outlay on staff amenities by as much as 45 per cent over the revised estimates for the current year. Railway staff members are highly committed and hardworking and I am proud of them. I would also take this opportunity to announce that keeping in view acute housing difficulties being faced by our employees, a novel housing scheme called "Own Your Own House" scheme is being devised. Detailed modalities in this regard will be worked out soon.

Sports

Sir, I am happy to inform the House that during the year 2000-01, Indian Railway sportspersons performed creditably both at the National and the International level. Many Railway Athletes participated in the Asian Track and Field Athletic Meet held at Jakarta in August, 2000 and won 9 Medals including

Indian Railways recently signed an MOU with M/s Continental Warehousing Corporation Ltd., Chennai. The MOU seeks to develop a new terminal near Gurgaon with state-of-art facility. In the picture Shri P.N. Shukla, Executive Director (Freight Marketing), Railway Board and Shri Keshav Reddy of M/s Continental Warehousing Corporation are seen wishing success to each other after signing the MOU.

3 Gold and 6 Silver in individual events. Apart from this, four Indian Railway athletes were members of the Gold and one Silver Medal winning relay teams.

Sir, the Members will be happy to know that the policy for recruitment of sportspersons has been revised and substantially liberalised to attract more talents. I am also happy to inform the House that we have decided to form a separate sports cadre at gazetted level with an objective of providing further promotion to outstanding sports persons.

Sir, I am also happy to inform the House that the allocation for Railways Sports Promotion Board is proposed to be increased to Rs. 3 cr. which is 36 per cent higher over the revised estimate for the current year. This will go a long way in promoting sports activities in the Railways.

Reforms and Restructuring

Sir, If I may be permitted to use a Railway metaphor, I would say that the Indian railways are today standing at a junction station. One track takes them to reforms, revival and rejuvenation. The other track will lead them to a nowhere land of crisis and chaos. Sir, we must make the right choice, sooner, rather than later. We have already set in motion various reform measures. Efforts are underway to generate resources through non-traditional sources. We recognise this task is not going to be easy at all and it cannot be done overnight as well. A system which remained largely unchanged during five decades will need some amount of time, continuity and perseverance with the full support of not only the Central Government but the State Governments as well. Sir, we also feel that in any reform exercise, our employees will be our strength. We feel that no reforms can be successful without full involvement of the people. I would like to assure this House that Railways shall not be privatised.

The House is aware that a Railways Expert Group was set up in 1998. The Group has submitted an Interim Executive Summary of its report very recently, which is under examination. The detailed report is awaited.

Sir, we all know that Railways urgently need modernisation. However, we need to select appropriate technology. We also have to find innovative means of funding this process of modernisation. I am happy to inform the House that I have set up an Advisory Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Sam Pitroda for suggesting ways and means of initiating comprehensive modernisation of Indian Railways with the application of appropriate technologies. The Committee will also suggest areas for resource mobilisation in various facets of railway functioning.

International Co-operation

In our continuing efforts to promote international co-operation amongst the neighbouring countries, I am happy to inform the House that the rail link between Petrapole in India and Benapole in Bangladesh has recently been restored and opened for goods traffic. This will pave the way for running of passenger services also.

Budget Estimates, 2001-02

Sir, I shall now deal with the Budget Estimates for 2001-02.

A general recession has been observed in the economy since 1998-99, as we all know. Consequently, the infrastructure sector has also shown a downward trend in recent years. Despite this, Indian Railways have shown remarkable resilience and performed quite well for last two years in terms of freight loading etc. In 2001-02 Indian Railways showed a moderated and somewhat subdued growth in freight traffic mainly due to slowing down of economy. It would be recollected that Railways had performed very well and had achieved a growth of 8.43 per cent in freight traffic in 1999-2000. In the current year, mainly due to improved supply of coal to powerhouses, the goods traffic to end January 2001, at 389.40 million is 4.98 per cent higher than the level achieved in the corresponding period of last year.

The Freight traffic target for the budget year 2001-02 has been fixed at 500 million tonnes, an increment of 25 million

Shri Satya Prakash, Chief Commercial Manager (Passenger Marketing), Western Railway and OSD on Board Services presented a report on Board Services to erstwhile Member Traffic, Railway Board Shri Shanti Narain at New Delhi on February 5.

tonnes over the current year's target of 475 million tonnes. This ambitious target has been kept in view of the special marketing efforts being made by the Railways and on an application of an expected faster growth of the economy. In this context, I am happy to announce that to facilitate adequate availability of rolling stock for freight movement, for the second year in succession, wagon procurement target has been projected at level of 23,000 for the next year. This will give further fillip to the wagon industry in general. For passenger traffic, 9 per cent increase has been provided in keeping with the long-term growth in passenger traffic. With these projection, the goods earnings are assessed at Rs. 24,735 cr. and passenger earnings at Rs. 11,387 cr.

In view of the initiatives taken in the parcel segment, a growth of 8.8 per cent has been projected and consistent with this 'Other Coaching' earnings are placed at Rs. 850 cr. Recognizing the imperatives of identifying and tapping the potential of non-traditional revenue, the initiative taken while presenting the Railway Budget last year is proposed to be continued. It is the expectation that with the groundwork done during the current year, there will be distinctly improved achievement during 2001-02. Accordingly, Sundry Other Earnings, for 2001-02 have been placed at Rs. 1717 cr., which include Rs. 700 cr. by way of leasing for 'right of way' for optic fibre cables, Rs. 200 cr. from commercial exploitation of land and air space; and another Rs. 100 cr. through commercial on Railway premises and rolling stock, apart from a normal growth of 5.4 per cent.

Sir, the bulk of the outstanding dues in Traffic Suspense relate to Power Houses especially Badarpur Thermal Power Station. The House would agree that no organisation can sustain dues of the order of Rs. 1662 cr. which has outstanding as on 31st March 2000. We had kept a clearance target of Rs. 500 from Badarpur Thermal Power Station during 2000-01 relying on an assurance given by the Ministry of Power. However, the outstanding continues to mount and, as on 31st December 2000, these stand of Rs. 3027 cr. Sir, Railways are always a good paymaster. But Sir, we do not receive our dues especially from Power sector. Even then, we continue to carry coal for powerhouses.

In anticipation of a positive development in this regard, a target of Rs. 750 cr. of clearance from Traffic Suspense has been kept, expecting a sizeable clearance of these dues. Gross Traffic Receipts are accordingly estimated at Rs. 39,439 cr.

Ordinary Working Expenses at Rs. 30,190 cr. provide for a minimal increase over the current year, resulting in a total variation of 8.53 per cent over the Revised Estimates, for 2000-01. Appropriation to Pension Fund is placed at Rs. 5790 cr and Depreciation Reserved has been provided at Rs 2704 cr based upon the actual requirement for plan resources.

The total Working Expenses will, thus, amount to Rs. 38,684 cr. leading to Net Traffic Receipts of Rs. 755 cr. Net Miscellaneous Receipts are estimated at Rs. 928 cr. This also takes into account Rs. 300 cr. proposed to be received from General Revenues for Railway Safety Works. Thus, the Net Revenue works out to Rs. 1683 cr.

Dividend to General Revenues has been worked out at 7 per cent of the Capital-at-charge as recommended by the Railway Convention Committee. The Memorandum for the year 2001-02 has been submitted to the Committee and their Report has been laid in the House on 23rd February 2001. The dividend projected in the Budget Estimate 2001-02 is Rs. 2352 cr. However, in view of a shortfall in internal resources for plan needs and based on details worked out in consultation with the Finance Ministry, it is proposed to pay to General Revenues only Rs. 1352 cr. and transfer the balance Rs. 1000 cr. to the Deferred Dividend Liability Account.

Based on the above projection, the "Excess" of receipts over expenditure in 2001-02 comes to Rs. 331 cr, which fall short of the requirements of plan expenditure by Rs. 500 cr. In view of the limited internal resources, appropriation to be made on the Capital Fund would be

CLW Enters World Market

THE Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, an electric loco manufacturing unit under the Ministry of Railways is drawing a long term plan to enter into the world market for exporting state-of-the-art electric locomotives.

This has been possible as a result of ultra modern facilities recently created in the CLW for manufacturing of the-state-of-art three-phase drive electric locomotives of international quality. With this India has become second in Asia and the fifth in the World to manufacture such locomotives after France, Japan, Switzerland and Germany.

The CLW's plans have received considerable boost with the recent visits of the Turkish Transport Minister and a high level delegation from South Africa to its plant. The two countries have shown keen interest for cooperating with the Indian Railways to fulfill their locomotive power requirements.

The Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, which started its production on 26th January 1950, is celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year. It has made significant contribution towards the upgradation of Indian Railways in the high speed traction and has saved considerable foreign exchange for the country since its inception.

limited to the quantum of interest payable on the loan taken from the General Exchequer in 2000-01. All projects hitherto charged to Capital Fund would now be funded from Capitals. This leaves uncovered gap of Rs. 500 cr. which is required to be mobilised additionally.

Sir, last year I had not increased the freight rates for essential commodities. This year also, I do not propose increase the freight rates of essential commodities like edible salt, grains & pulses, sugar, fruit & vegetables, urea, edible oils, kerosene and LPG. These commodities are used by everyone and constitute a significant part of the housewives' budget. I have no intention to upset the domestic budget and therefore I am exempting these commodities from any hike.

Sir, I am aware that an increase in freight rates has some direct or indirect effect on the economy. It must, however, be recognised that Railways are also being subjected to similar inflationary pressure. As was done in the previous year, the Railways will continue to absorb some part of the increase in the cost of inputs, but the circumstances demand that freight rates have to be adjusted by a small margin. As such I propose a nominal three per cent (3 per cent) increase in rates of all commodities except those essential commodities mentioned before or those proposed to be charged differently as under. Keeping in view the request made by major industries, I have decided that freight rates for coal (not meant for household consumption) and Iron & Steel (Division A,B, and C) is also proposed to be increased by only two percent (2 per cent). Further, in order to attract more Black Oil traffic to rail, the increse for Furnace Oil is proposed to be restricted to one percent (1 per cent).

Certain sections of the Railway network have become saturated, yet the demand on these sections is still growing. As is normal in the pricing policy in various transport sectors, I propose to charge a premium for carriage of traffic over these sections. The distance of charge would be suitably inflated for freight traffic on a few congested sections experimentally during this year.

In view of the increase of seven percent (7 per cent) in Parcel rate made in last budget, I propose to exempt Parcel & Luggage rates from any increase next year. This exemption will also be applicable to newspaper, magazines and medicines etc.

Sir, I am happy to announce that concessional MST (Monthly Season Ticket) scheme meant for the people below the poverty line which was approved last year will continue.

Sir, in the concessions granted to various categories of handicapped persons, there has been certain grievance from those who are visually handicapped or mentally handicapped. Sir, in order to ensure uniformity in availing the concessional facilities by all categories of handicapped persons, I am happy to announce that the visually handicapped and mentally handicapped persons shall also be entitled to the same benefits which are otherwise available to orthopaedically handicapped and paraplegic persons.

Sir, our vision is to make the Indian Railways an example of commitment. Our vision is to make the railway journey a matter of joy for every passenger. Our vision is to given travel opportunity to every Indian at affordable cost. Our vision is to unlock the hidden wealth of the railways and make it a strong self-sustained organisation, devoted to the cause of national development.

Sir, I am committed to make each of my dreams come true. And I will do this with all 16 lakh family members of Indian Railways.

Sir, you will recall that I did not increase the passenger fares in the last budget. There have been many criticisms on this account. But I drawn strength from the famous quote of Tagore:–

"Give me the strength, never to disown the poor or bend my knees before insolent might."

I would like to bring to your notice Sir, that despite there being no increase in passenger fares, the earnings from passenger traffic are poised to exceed the budgeted level. Till December, 2000 there has been an increase of ten per cent (10 per cent) compared to the same period last year. I attribute this to various efforts being made by the Railways to augment passenger traffic and the general improvement in the services and amenities offered to the travelling public. I am hopeful that this buoyancy would continue in the coming year as well. I do not, therefore, propose to increase the passenger fares of any class or category of trains.

Conclusion

In the end, I wish to express my gratitude to the respected Prime Minister for his encouragement and support. My sincere thanks are also due to all the railwaymen for their hard work and dedication to duty, which has helped the Railways in achieving their task successfully. I am also thankful to the rail users whose cooperation we have been getting always.

Sir, with these words I commend the Railway Budget 2001-02 to the House.

New Superfast Trains

Three Express trains will be classified as superfast trains w.e.f. 1st April this year. These are 8001/8002 Mumbai-Howrah Mail, 7091/ 7092 Secunderabad-Varanasi Express and 1029/1030 Pune-Howrah Azad Hind Express.

The above trains run at a speed more than 55 kmph in both directions. Necessary instructions have been issued by the Ministry of Railways to the concerned Zonal Railways.

Seminar on Electric Energy Management in Rail Sector

THE Minister of State for Railways, Shri Digvijay Singh said that a time had come when the Railways should look for various alternatives to obtain electric energy from reasonably priced sources. Presiding over the inaugural session of the two-day international seminar on 'Electric Energy Management in Rail Sector' at New Delhi on February 2, the Minister said that Railways were expected to provide cost effective transport to the common man and also to contribute in the Development of far-flung areas. But unfortunately the organisations supplying power to the Railways had been increasing the tariffs rather unreasonably over many years.

Shri Digvijay Singh said that Railways had taken some initiative like obtaining direct power supply from central generating agencies but it is looking towards the Ministry of Power which has initiated steps towards significant reforms in the power sector.

Earlier, inaugurating the Seminar the Minister for Power, Shri Suresh Prabhu appreciated the role played by Railways in the country's development by providing cheap and affordable commuter and passenger services as also by transporting goods including essential commodities at cheaper rates. He said that in order to help the Railways continue performing this catalytic role, it is necessary that its energy requirements are met at reasonable rates. He assured that the Ministry of Power will extend all cooperation in this regard.

Delivering the key-note address, Shri N.K. Chidambaram, Member Electrical and the Patron of the Institution of Railway Electrical Engineers dwelt on the various initiatives taken by the Indian Railways. He said that Indian Railways are among the first few to boldly adopt the 25 KV AC system and now practically all the modern railway systems in the world operating on 25KV AC. The Indian Railways have already replaced the highly wasteful resistance control method with the tap changer technology for AC locomotives. These are now being upgraded with the latest state-of-the-art three-phased technology using induction motors. He said the Indian Railways have also decided to switch over to the three-phase technology in the area of suburban and urban commuter traffic for electrical multiple units popularly known as EMUs.

The two-day Seminar was organised by the Institution of Railway Electrical Engineers of the Indian Railways. It dwelt on various electrification aspects of the Indian Railways including Electricity Pricing & Tariffs, Urban & Suburban Rail Based Transit System. Energy Efficient Rolling Stock, Energy Management in Power Supply Systems and Infrastructure etc. The Seminar also deliberated on future emerging technologies such as magnetic levitation, liner induction motor and fuel cell technologies. ●

Shri Digvijay Singh, Minister of State for Railways lighting the lamp to inaugurate the Seminar on Electric Energy Management in Rail Sector at New Delhi on February 2.

FAST

FORWARD

Express speed gives ECC the edge in railway electrification

ECC is one of the few organisations in India with the resources and the reach to handle the most challenging railway electrification projects. In project after project, ECC has demonstrated its ability to meet demands and difficult deadlines with innovation and speed.

This is particularly evident in our service to the Indian Railways. With a capacity of electrifying 500 track km a year, we have a track record of more than 5000 track km. What makes these achievements more noteworthy is the amazingly short span of time taken for the completion of these projects and others like privately owned sidings on a turnkey basis.

However speed is not our only forte. Original and innovative system design has put ECC in the forefront.

Our expertise also covers route survey and computer-based system design for overhead equipment as well as traction substations. We also undertake sourcing of major components, installation, testing and commissioning of overhead equipment, switching stations, traction substations including 2 x 25 kV system, booster and auxiliary transformer stations and transmission lines for railways and other utilities.

With a strong and dedicated workforce, we have catered to the ever-growing needs of the railways. Like the Indian Railways, we have a mission to make India march fast and forward.

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Clarity ECC 804c

New Luxury Tourist Train for Maharashtra and Konkan

A new airconditioned luxury train on the lines of the world famous 'Palace on Wheels' will start running soon on the Mumbai-Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg-Goa-Pune-Aurangabad-Ajanata & Ellora-Nasik-Mumbai route as a joint venture between the Indian Railways and the Government of Maharashtra. A Memorandum of Understanding to this effect was signed between the Ministry of Railways and the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation, at New Delhi on February 7. The project was announced by the Railway Minister, Kum. Mamata Banerjee in her last budget speech for the year 2000-2001.

The MOU was signed by Shri Shiv Kumar Chowdhri, Executive Director, Tourism and Catering in the Railway Board, on behalf of the Ministry of Railways, and Shri Ashish Kumar Singh, Managing Director, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation on behalf of the Government of Maharashtra. The Railway Minister, Kum. Mamata Banerjee, Union Minister for Power Shri Suresh Prabhu, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister, Shri Chhagan Bhujbal and Minister of Tourism Shri Rajendra Darda alongwith senior officials and dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion Kum. Banerjee said that linking tourism with the Railways will benefit both the state governments and the Railways, besides creating jobs for the local persons. We have to think of innovative ideas. Reforms do not mean burdening the people but they imply to take them along and benefit them.

Shri Shiv Kumar Chowdhri, Executive Director, Tourism & Catering, Railway Board and Shri Ashish Kumar Singh, MD, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation exchanging the MOU on February 7. Looking on are Railway Minister Kum. Mamata Banerjee and Dy. Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri Chhagan Bhujabal.

The MOU signed today envisages sharing of capital cost of the train between the Indian Railways and the Government of Maharashtra. While the Railways will be responsible for operation of the train, the Government of Maharashtra will provide comprehensive package with facilities including on-board services, sight seeing, boarding and lodging. The Government of Maharashtra will also be responsible for marketing, publicity and sale of tickets. The earnings of the tourist train would be shared between the Indian Railways and the Government of Maharashtra.

The Maharashtra luxury train, which will be the third of its type in the country, after Rajasthan and Gujarat, will primarily aim at showcasing the tourism assets of Maharashtra like the beautiful Konkan coast, its varied art and culture, its ancient heritage like the Maharashtra world heritage sites of Ajanta and Ellora, its crafts and even the cuisine. It will be a seven days round trip starting tentatively on every Sunday night from Mumbai.

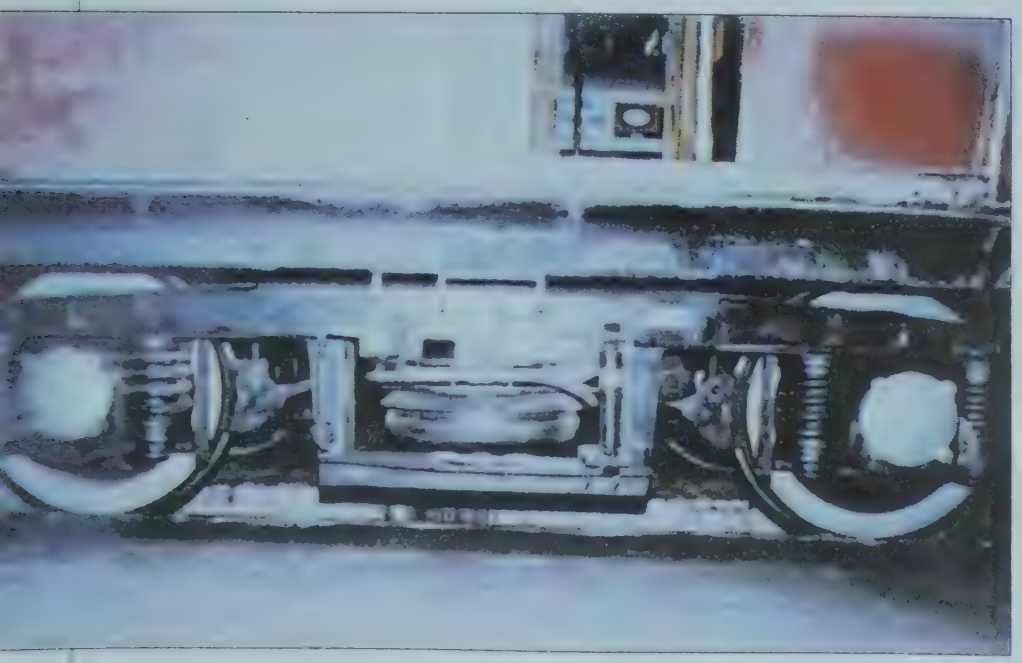
It was in 1981-82 that the Indian Railways launched the famous Palace on Wheels in collaboration with the State Government of Rajasthan with a view to serve as an important tourism catalyst and foreign exchange earner for the country. This train was initially run on the metre gauge section with the original vintage sallons of erstwhile Maharajas. In 1991, these overaged saloons were taken off from operation and replaced by a new metre gauge airconditioned train at a cost of Rs. 8 crore approximately. Consequent upon conversion of the metre gauge track to broad gauge in Rajasthan sector, a new broad gauge air conditioned rake was put into operation in the year 1995. These trains have emerged as big foreign exchange earner generating a revenue of around 16.5 million US dollars in the last five years.

Pneumatic Suspension with Air Spring on Indian Railways

The existing EMU trailer coaches were initially designed for 18t pay load which has now gone above 34t. Under this super dense crush loads, the clearances basically meant for absorbing dynamic movements, just vanish resulting into hitting of bogie components. This situation leads to poor riding and large-scale failure of bogie components.

To overcome the problem, two possible solutions were thought of. One-upgrade coil spring suspension and the other-design improved suspension. In case of coil spring suspension, the deflection is proportional to the load due to which space constraint becomes critical under high pay load situations, use of stiffer spring result in unsatisfactory ride behaviour and reduced speed potential. Hence, upgraded coil spring suspension was not possible.

Pneumatic suspension having constant height under varying load conditions and having progressive characteristics has been one of the possible solutions which has shown successful performance abroad also in suburban services.



Pneumatic suspension.

The DC-EMU coaches (940B MC & 604C TC) having pneumatic suspension at secondary stage are under service trials on Churchgate-Virar section of Western Railway, since March 2000 and have shown so far satisfactory performance.

Fundamental Principle of Air Spring

The fundamental principle of an air-spring is a mass of air under pressure in a vessel arranged so that the pressure exerts a force. The amount of static force developed by the air spring is dependent on the internal pressure and the size and configuration of the vessel. Dynamic force is the result of changes in internal pressure and air spring effective area due to height variation.

When a vehicle having air springs in its suspension is at rest, and then load is added or removed, the height control valve operates to add or remove sufficient air in the air spring to maintain the set height of air spring. This then increases or decreases the pressure in the air spring the amount needed to provide the required lifting force to match the current downward force created by the new load condition, and equilibrium is again reached.

Self-damping properties are obtained by using appropriate size orifice which is provided between air spring and additional air reservoir. The resistance caused by air flow through orifice provides damping. The overall vertical and lateral characteristic of air spring depends upon the pressure and volume of air, shape and size of air bellows besides properties of air used and its polytropic index.

Present Status of Pneumatic Suspension

Pneumatic suspension having air spring at secondary stage has been taken up on Indian Railways. The optimised values of stiffness and damping characteristics for best stability and riding behaviour of coaches having air springs are arrived at by simulation studies using Vehicle Dynamics software package "NUCARS" supplied by Association of American Rail Roads, USA. Subsequent to simulation studies, the prototype vehicle is subjected to detailed oscillation trials for validation of results and further design optimisation if possible.

Musical Evening in Aid of Quake Victims

THE Railway Women's Welfare Central Organisation (RWWCO) organised a musical programme at Siri Fort Auditorium, New Delhi on February 9. The programme was aimed to raise funds for the earthquake victims of Gujarat.

The musical evening was largely attended. An audience of over 2000 people raptly listened to the songs presented at the Siri Fort Auditorium. Special highlight of the musical evening was the rendering of songs by the noted playback singer Sudesh Bhosle and his troupe specially invited for the programme.

Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha Dr. Nazma Heptulla was the Chief Guest on the occasion. Shri Digvijay Singh, Minister of State for Railways and Smt. Singh were the Guests of Honour. The function was presided over by Shri Ashok Kumar, Chairman, Railway Board.

Dr. Nazma Heptulla, Deputy Chairperson, Rajya Sabha lighting the lamp to mark the inauguration of Musical Evening in aid of Gujarat earthquake victims and AIDS awareness programme on Indian Railways. Looking on in the picture are Shri Digvijay Singh, Minister of State for Railways and Smt. Singh.

Welcome song being rendered by Railway Board artists directed by Shri R.K. Sharma.

The programme was organised by Smt. Madhur Naraian, the then President, RWWCO. The 38-year old organisation, RWWCO has carved out an important position for itself in the welfare activities of the railway persons and the society, responding on all occasions to National calamities as well as to the specific welfare needs of the railway family.

The inaugural programme was participated by Vaidehi Gopal, Bharty Ganeshan, Sita Nair and Rama Anand. Among other artists, who took part in the inaugural celebration were Indu Chauhan, Sashi Rawat, R.K. Majumdar, Harbans and U.S. Negi. They rendered the welcome song written by Dharmender Sagar. The Music was composed by Shri R.K. Sharma and Krishan Dev of Railway Board. ●

All India Jamboree

Shri K. Balakesari, Member Staff, Railway Board giving away awards to scouts and guides at the 9th All India Railway Jamboree held at Jhansi from February 7 to 11.

THE 9th All India Railway Jamboree was held at Jhansi from February 7 to 11. The Scouts and Guides selected from 9 districts of Northern Railway took part at the Jamboree inaugurated by Shri Rajendra Nath, General Manager, Central Railway on February 7.

The Railway Scouts and Guides presented demonstrations of adventure and also took part in cultural programmes held during the Jamboree occasion. The marchpast held on the opening show was largely appreciated by the

The scouts participating in the marchpast.

people who witnessed the programme. The prizes were given away by Member Staff, Railway Board Shri K. Balakesari on February 11. The Jhansi Division was given an award of Rs. 25,000. The Northern Railway Scouts wing which won the first position in the meet was given an award of Rs. 2500. Northern Railway also won the over all shield in the scout section and bagged as many as 12 first positions in the competitions. The Northern Railway team presented a colourful pageant show which was a special attraction of the programme. The success of the Jamboree was attributed to the initiative and the leadership of Smt. Sudesh Sharma, Asstt. State Secretary, State Training Commissioner, Northern Railway.

Eminent Engineer Award to S.P. Mehta

Shri S.P. Mehta, General Manager, Northern Railway has bagged Eminent Engineer Award. The award was presented to him by Shri N. Vittal, Central Vigilance Commissioner at the platinum jubilee celebration of Institute of Engineers (India), Delhi State Centre at New Delhi on February 27.

Shri S.P. Mehta, General Manager, Northern Railway receiving the Eminent Engineer Award from Shri N. Vittal, Central Vigilance Commissioner at New Delhi on February 27.

The gate of 9th Jamboree erected by the Railway scouts and guides.

Giving away the award Shri Vittal lauded the efforts of the Indian Engineers who had played an important role in the development of the country. As many as six eminent engineers from different fields were honoured on the occasion.

Shri Mehta joined Indian Railway Service of Engineers in 1963. After passing out M.Sc. Engg (highways) from Punjab University. He has worked on a number of important positions of Indian Railways and also headed a project in Iraq for the design and specifications of the structure for Baghdad-Alqaim-Akshat Railway project.

Shri Mehta was Divisional Railway Manager in NF Railway and Chief Engineer Construction in Northern Railway. He has authored a number of technical papers which were read in important seminars.

NF Railway Inter Divisional Limited Over Cricket Tournament

THE NF Railway Construction Sports Club organized the Kamala Devi Memorial Inter Divisional Limited Over (40 overs) one day Cricket Tournament at Maligaon Railway Stadium on February 4.

Seven teams from different Divisions of NF Railway participated in the tournament. In the opening quarter final match played between the Railway Sports Club/Dibrugarh, the Headquarters team defeated the RWSC/Dibrugarh team by 10 wickets who scored 129 runs losing all wickets in 38 overs. In reply, the RSC/ Headquarters scored 131 runs without losing any wickets in 25 overs. Shri Anup Sarma & Shri Tarun Das remained unbeaten with 55 & 47 runs respectively. Shri Amal Das of RSC/Headquarters took 5 wickets giving 23 runs in 7 overs of which one over was maiden.

The match was conducted by umpires Nurul Hussain and Ashish Bhattacharya.

The final match was played on February 2.

Earlier, Shri G.R. Madan, General Manager (Con), NF Railway inaugurated the tournament and was introduced to the players of both the teams before starting the quarter final match.

The Railway cricket team at Nambari.

Athletic Meet

The Katihar Division of Northeast Frontier Railway hosted the 37th NF Railway Inter-Divisional Athletic Championship and the 15th NF Railway Inter-School Athletic Championship from January 27 to 29. The NF Railway team for all India Railway Athletic Championship was selected at the meet.

The selected sports persons for the national meet had a training for 10 days at Katihar and left for New Delhi from Katihar on February 8.

Philatelic Honour to Churchgate Building

THE Postal authorities have released a commemorative stamp of Rs. 15 to mark the centenary of Western Railway Headquarters heritage building at Churchgate, Mumbai. The stamp depicts the magnificient grade I heritage of Churchgate building.

The stamp was presented by the Chief Post Master General, Maharashtra state Shri D.S. Balchandra to the General Manager of Western Railway on February 6 at Churchgate, Mumbai.

The building constructed in 1899 at a cost of Rs. 7.5 lakh was designed by the well known Victorian architect F.W. Stevenson. The building was the headquarters of the then Bombay, Vadodara and Central India Railway (BV&CI). It became the headquarters of Western Railway after independence.

Shri D.S. Balchandra, Chief Post Master General, Maharashtra Circle presenting an album of commemorative postage stamp to Shri V.D. Gupta, General Manager, Western Railway.

Churchgate Building.

Conservation of Ground Water

RAIL Coach Factory has developed a novel scheme (Phase-1) for conservation of ground water resource by which the treated effluent from Sewage Treatment Plant will be used for irrigation of grass foliage in golf course area. This effluent has been found suitable for irrigation, as per norms specified by Pollution Control Board.

According to Shri K.R. Govindarajan, General Manager, Rail Coach Factory, in the first Phase, about 30,000-40,000 KL of ground water will be conserved in a month. The usage of potable ground water for horticulture activities will further be curtailed at large scale when irrigation of grassy parks of Workshop, Administrative Building & other important service buildings like hospital complex etc. will be done by this effluent on commissioning of Phase-II Scheme, likely to be completed by June this year.

Shri Govindarajan further elaborated that the treated effluent of Sewage Treatment Plant is rich enough to provide minerals required for healthy growth of grass foliage etc. and as such, its usage will also reduce consumption of fertilizers and farm yard manure presently used in golf course area.

Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala is ISO-14001 certified unit of Indian Railways, wherein emphasis is given on conservation of natural resources. Therefore, this innovative scheme is a definite step in showing its commitment for preservation of natural resources. This scheme will also go a long way in maintaining a static equilibrium to water table in Rail Coach Factory complex.

Bird's eye view of RCF.

Electronic Clearing Service

C. S. Saroy
FA & CAO, Northern Railway.

Northern Railway has taken the initiative of bringing about the advantages of the IT era. To reduce the burden of carrying out the voluminous cash and cheque transactions involved in salary payment and other nature of payment in Railways, Northern Railway has taken the lead in the introduction of the Electronic Clearing Service (Credit Clearing) for the salary payment to the employees in the first step.

Other variants of the scheme are also likely to be implemented for the contractual payment and other payment of regular nature.

Railway Board in various forums had also reiterated the introduction of ECS on Indian Railways.

The Electronic Clearing Scheme was inaugurated in October 2000 for disbursement of salaries of employees of Northern Railway through the Bank of the employees' choice within Delhi Clearing House. This scheme was successfully run as a pilot project in the Accounts Department of Northern Railway HQ office from August 2000. It was further extended to other departments of the HQ Tour from November, 2000. Overwhelming response has been received from the employees and over 1200 employees have been brought under the scheme so far. In order to understand the scheme a brief introduction is given here as under:

Objective

The objective is to provide an alternative method of effecting Bulk payment/transactions which would obviate the need for issuing and handling cheques and cash thereby facilitate improved customer service by the bank/Government department effecting the payment.

Salient Features

(i) The employees can opt for any destination bank for crediting his salary all over Delhi.

(ii) The Destination Bank Branches which fall under the jurisdiction of the Delhi Bankers' Clearing Houses under RBI, New Delhi, will be acceptable.

(iii) The Sponsor Bank (Syndicate Bank appointed for Northern Railway) will electronically transfer the credit to Destination Bank's Accounts on the settlement date i.e. the last working day of the month.

Advantages

(i) Guaranteed salary crediting in the employees account on the date of salary payment.

(ii) Salary can be drawn on any Bank in Delhi and its satellite towns covering Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Gurgaon, Bahadurgarh and Noida etc. having a MICR code of 9 digits on the cheque and attending the RBI/New Delhi clearing.

(iii) Automatic penalty shall be imposed on the bank (@11 per cent p.a.), if they fail to credit the individual/employees account.

(iv) Sponsor Bank (Syndicate Bank in this case) has offered various incentives in case the saving account is opened in their branch such as overdraft facility, house building and other loans facilities etc.

(v) Time saving and security in collection of cheque and depositing in the bank. Secured from the fear of loss of cheques etc.

How to Join the Scheme?

As desired by the bank, every employee is required to fill in the Mandate Form giving the details like employee's name, designation, department, and P.F. a/c No. and bank particulars viz: bank name, branch name, address/MICR Code (9 digits code as appearing on the cheque book), Saving Bank account number etc. and submit the same to his bill preparing unit. The bill preparing unit in turn will submit the same to the EDP Centre to process the request of the employee. The bill passing authority shall ensure that the individual acocunts get credited on the salary payment date. ●

Implementation of ITAS on Northern Railway

Accounts department of the Northern Railway has implemented the Integrated Transaction Accounting System in the headquarters office. The modules used in the ITAS are as under:

- CO-6 module
- CO-7 module
- Cheque Requisition module
- Cheque Printing module
- Journal Slips module
- Revenue & Capital Journal
- Ledger
- Accounts Current
- Provident Fund Accounts System
- Printing of PF Pass Books
- Suspense Registers

The scope of the ITAS covers accountal of all cash and adjustment vouchers at the initial stage. Thereafter all the necessary accountal processes are completed without feeding the data afresh. For example, after passing the bills, the booking of the expenditure under the relevant head of Account, posting of cash book, generation of cheque requisition, printing of cheques are done automatically as per the programme.

At the end of the accountal period, the Accounts office is now in a position to generate the monthly account current. It is now possible to prepare the account current without any error and that too well in time. The preparation of Account Current of entire Northern Railway by consolidating the data of the divisions will be done without any delay. By cutting short the delay, the railway will be able to send the consolidated account current to the Railway Board well in time.

As per the existing manual system, we were indicating the expenditure booked detailed head-wise to the user departments after three month of the booking of the actual expenditure. After the implementation of ITAS, it has become possible to generate the revenue allocation register giving detail of the expenditure booked head-wise to the user departments to enable them to take corrective action to control the expenditure as per the budget allotment.

It was decided in the month of August to computerise the PF Accountal system as per the ITAS module. The PF module developed by ED&RCI has been proved in the Hqrs. office and accordingly PF Accounts of 14,000 employees have been computerised. In addition to this, PF Section has issued computerised pass books to the subscribers which contain monthwise recoveries as well as withdrawal taken by the subscribers. This was not possible at all in the manual system.

The benefits which shall be accruing to the staff of accounts office as well executive departments after implementation the ITAS are briefly narrated as under:

- Provident Fund Accounts of over two lakh employees of Northern Railway. will be on-line in due course of time.
- Computerised PF Pass Book will be printed directly from the PF Ledger data base.
- Computerised PF Pass Book will contain month-wise subscription and withdrawals
- On-line Cheque Printing
- On-line transfer of Data to Hqrs. for financial management using RAILNET.
- Expenditure can be known on real time basis simply by querying.
- Account Current will be immediately compiled on closure of the accountal period.
- Reconciliation of Subsidiary Books with General Books will be much quicker and easier.
- There will be no arrears in the maintenance of PF Accounts, Suspense Registers

After successfully implementing the ITAS in the head office, their system was ported and commissioned in the Moradabad and Lucknow divisions on 15th and 16th January 2001 respectively. It has been planned to port and commission the ITAS system in other six divisions shortly. The necessary training has been imparted to the concerned staff and they are ready to adopt this system without any hindrance.

The system will usher in a new era of efficiency and productivity in the Accounts Office. Thus, we are heading towards a better and more efficient financial management system, which is the need of the hour. ●

—C. S. Saroy

Computers in Indian Languages

Harsh Kumar
Advisor IT, HPCL, Mumbai.

Let me begin this article by reminding the readers that the computers do not understand any languages other than "0" and "1". All codes/words/ programmes are finally translated into these two digits before being processed in the computer.

However, since humans are not very comfortable in using just these two symbols and they use a language to communicate with each other they have taught their language to computers.

The code to which word/command "copy" refers to accepts two arguments and copies the file name passed by the first argument to the location/name passed by the second argument. It does not matter whether we call the command "copy", "COPY" "Kapi" or even just "xyz" or for that matter word, which is the equivalent word in Hindi. This will work as long as the code it refers to is the same and the two required arguments are passed on.

We must understand that it is our decision as to what we want to call this command (code). The command will do whatever it has been programmed to do, no matter what we call it. It is mentioned that codes for all the "reserved" words for every computer language are available and all one has to do to port a language is to change the "labels" by which these codes are addressed. This may, perhaps, appear rather simplistic but it is certainly not far from the truth.

The computers understand English because they were developed by people who used English. A number of other countries, having economic power or number power, too have computers in their language, (e.g., China, Japan, Germany, France etc.). Some of the countries had felt so strongly about the issue of "language on computer" that they had sent government representatives to the computer companies in the US to have the computer in their language. Unfortunately we in India did/could not demand and have the computers that understand our language.

"We do not find any town in India which does not have a computer training centre. All the boys and girls passing out of these centres will certainly not be able to get jobs in the US and other countries. We will have to find jobs for them in India."

Let me mention what is the essential requirement for representing any language on computers. There are only two essential requirements to represent a language on computers :

- The language must have a Script, and
- There must be a way to represent/ show the script on the computers.

Our languages have a script and there are applications available to represent them on computers and, therefore, computers can and must understand them. We have to understand and accept that the fault why computers do not understand our language does not lie in our language. We have no one but only ourselves to blame why the computers do not understand our language.

When we are discussing the language issue we must recognize and praise the efforts of some of the organizations that have worked to facilitate the use of Indian languages on computers. However, this is not enough. We must have computers (i.e., the Operating System, Application Development tools, programmes etc.), which understand our languages and to work on them, our people do not have to learn 'English'. Not having such computers will create very anomalous situation in our country. Before I talk about the anomaly this situation may/will create, I must stress on one basic fact. The fact is that, in our country in the 21st century one has to know "English" to be able to use computers. If one does not know this language then one cannot use the computers and take advantage of the basic tool of this century.

If we do not take steps to change this situation, the English knowing group will use computers, get full benefits of the Information Technology revolution and forge ahead. Whereas the group not knowing English, which is perhaps economically not as strong, will be left behind. In order to reduce the gap between these two groups, I support the creation of "Computers in Indian Language", rather than taxing the 'English knowing Computer using' population.

However, it is not that no one is doing anything to present a FREE Indian

language OS. I do not know what others have done but I certainly know what we have done and what we have planned. We have been working on this issue and have made some progress. It is now possible to prepare GUI front-ends on Linux applications in Indian language. The method of preparing such front-ends and the code for this 'notepad' type of application will be freely shared so that others wanting to develop such applications can benefit from this exercise. I am sure such effort to put Indian languages on Linux, the FREE operating system will go a long way to check this widening gap, besides generating a new area for employment.

This will also enable us to have an OS, which is FREE, 'open' and 'known' with no 'secrets' and no 'hidden keys' etc.. If an OS is not 'open', we would not know when and what it exchanges information from our computer with its master abroad. I certainly want to raise the question whether such systems that are not open and known, no matter how useful, should be relied upon for use by the Government and by organizations for their confidential and strategic applications. This issue has now become very relevant and important as the computers remain connected to the Internet all the time and it is really impossible to monitor them on 365 x 24 basis. Linux, the 'open source' and free OS, will go a long way in helping us on this front as there are no secrets in it and the whole source code is available for scrutiny, alteration, addition and modifications. We can scrutinize the source code and satisfy ourselves that we can rely on it to guard our privacy and the confidential and secret information.

This is to show that Indian language front-ends can be prepared on applications on Linux. The additional efforts required in making such Indian language front-ends is not much. However they open the IT market also to section of our populations that does not know English.

We in India, often boast of our large computer trained human-power resource. This is an ever-growing resource because of the growing population and the fact that we do not find any town in India, which does not have a computer-training centre. All the boys and girls passing out of these will certainly not be able to get jobs in the US and other countries. We will have to find jobs for them in India. I cannot think of finding a better way to create jobs for them than hoping that they will take to developing software in the local language on Linux, the "Free OS', and satisfy the needs of the local markets. This will not only help in generating employment but will also channelize benefits of IT to the non-English speaking group. I do sincerely hope, wish and pray that computing in Indian languages picks up otherwise after a few years we may have the dubious distinction of having the largest pool of unemployed "IT-Trained" human-power in the world.

To know more about the efforts to prepare Indian language OS please visit the following site: http://www.bharatbhasha.org

Space Programme

India Forges Ahead

Dr K. Kasturirangan
Secretary, Department of Space,
Government of India.

The Indian space programme continues to progress towards development and application of space science and technology for socio-economic development. The launch of INSAT-3B on March 22, 2000 and its successful commissioning after post-launch operations, deployment of the solar arrays and antennas, 3-axis stabilisation and testing of the transponders has further expanded the capacity of the INSAT system. The follow-on satellite in the INSAT-3 series, namely, INSAT-3C is in an advanced stage of fabrication and testing and its planned for launch in 2001. INSAT-3A, INSAT-3D and INSAT-3E that will follow, are in various stages of development and testing.

Another satellite, METSAT, is also being built for providing, meteorological and data relay services. Besides, the GSAT-1 and GSAT-2 which will be launched by the developmental flights of India's Geo-synchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV), will provide opportunities to test advanced satellite communication technologies like digital audio broadcasting, Internet services, and distance education. Thus, the INSAT system is poised for further expansion of its capabilities to provide enhanced services in communication, broadcasting and meteorology.

Developmental Communication

As part of a countrywide GRAMSAT pilot, Swarn Jayanti Vidya Vikas

Antariksh Upagraha Yojana (Vidyavahini) has been inaugurated in Orissa using INSAT-3B. Vidyavahini will be used by Orissa to provide developmental communications to about 800 villages in the Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput (KBK) region. A transponder of INSAT-3B has been provided to Andhra Pradesh for promoting distance education, tele-medicine, agricultural extension, e-governance and community Internet centres. The GRAMSAT pilot project is planned to cover other states also in a progressive manner. The Jhabua Development Communication Project (JDCP) in Madhya Pradesh, started in November 1996, is being expanded to cover all panchayats of Jhabua district and 200 villages in the neighbouring Dhar and Barwani districts are going to be its beneficiaries. The training and development communication channel, which is operational since February 1995, continues to be used by several agencies for interactive, training and education. Thus India has further reiterated its commitment to use space-based communication for the benefit of society at the grassroots level.

The announcement of norms, guidelines and procedures for satellite communications that envisages allocation of INSAT system capability for non-governmental users and registration of Indian satellite systems like private companies, signifies that the Indian space programme has taken cognisance of the economic liberalisation while, preparing itself to compete with the industries in the field at the same time.

Space-based Remote Sensing

In the area of space-based remote sensing, India continues to use its IRS satellites, the world's biggest constellation comprising IRS-IB, IRS-IC, IRS-ID, IRS-P3 and OCEANSAT (IRS-P4), to provide data for applications in agriculture, forestry, surface and ground water harnessing, geology, urban planning, land use and land cover mapping, flood mapping and ocean resources survey. Data from IRS-P4 (OCEANSAT), which was launched in May 1999, is being used for retrieval of oceanic parameter. Development, fabrication and testing of follow-on satellites in the IRS series, namely, RESOURCESAT and CARTOSAT-1 are progressing well. Significant progress has also been made in developing a Technology Experiment Satellite (TES), which is aimed at testing and validating advanced spacecraft bus and payload technologies. Work on an advanced cartographic satellite, CARTOSAT-2, has also been initiated and thus India is determined to retain its leadership in the development and application of space-based remote sensing.

Significant progress has been achieved in the development of India's Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) that will be capable of launching 2000-2500 kg class satellites in geo-stationary transfer orbit. The vehicle assembly is now in progress and the first developmental test flight is planned to take place shortly. Having already achieved self-reliance to launch IRS class of satellites using PSLV, realisation of GSLV will be a significant step towards achieving self-reliance in launching INSAT class of communication satellites. Preparations are also under way for the next launch of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C3), which will launch TES. It is to be noted that PSLV is now offered for launching satellites of other space agencies also. PROBA, a satellite of a Belgian company and BIRD of the German space agency, DLR, are already slated for launch on board PSLV. It is also planned to use PSLV for a geo-synchronous mission for launching India's METSAT.

Advanced Research

India continues to pursue advanced research in space sciences. The launch of 40 Rohini-sounding rockets on successive days in March-April 2000 along with ground-based observations using low altitude balloons and Mesosphere-Stratosphere-Troposphere Radar was a major scientific campaign to study atmospheric waves. Preliminary studies have been initiated for undertaking an unmanned lunar mission using PSLV and GSLV and making use of the capabilities. These are currently being analysed by a team of scientists and technologists. That three Indian students were among nine selected as student scientists by the Planetary Society, USA to participate in the "Red Rover Goes to Mars" mission, is an indication of the immense potential that exists in the country to take up advanced space exploration.

Academic institutions and universities continue to be involved in the Indian space programme. Several projects have been initiated in the universities under Sponsored Research Scheme (RESPOND). The space technology cells set up at reputed institutions continue to carry out research activities in selected areas relevant to the space programme.

With a view to promoting space technology and ensure its benefits for the population in the northeastern region, the North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NE-SAC) has been started. NESAC will address natural resources management and developmental communication and encourage space science research in the region.

On the commercial front, India continues to make headway for marketing space services and hardware to international customers. India is well poised to provide launch services to international customers having already bagged a few launch services contracts against global competition. There are several ground stations all over the world today that receive data from the Indian remote sensing satellites under commercial agreements.

Thus, India continues to forge ahead in its space programme thereby providing increasing benefits to its people. ●

Dr S. Dandapani (IRTS) (Retd.)
United Nations Consultant for Consumer Protection.

Consumer Protection : A Tool for Management

Six thousand million population all over the world are consumers. Whether they are young or old; rich or poor, they are deceived everyday in every transaction in every part of the world! Our knowledge and enlightenment in this field is overtaken by the producers and suppliers of goods & services almost continuously. Women claim to be clever shoppers by scouting around before parting with their money. However, our researches have proved conclusively how their perception fails them when they look at cosmetics, jewellery and so on.

John Kennedy & Consumer Rights

President John Kennedy recognised this. He knew the ongoing conflict between the producers and consumers- each group wanting to maximise their return at the cost of the other. In the early 60s, John Kennedy took the bold initiative of declaring a set of Consumer Rights. They are:

Right	To	Safety
Right	To	Information
Right	To	Choose
Right	To	Be heard

In his view, these rights should be the irreducible minimum and should constitute the fundamental rights for every consumer regardless of rich or poor: young or old. By declaring these rights, John Kennedy did not think that all problems would be over. What he thought was that the Producers (of goods & services) and Consumers would recognise the inter dependence; get closer to each other and be aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses. He wanted an understanding in the marketplace and a steady growth without any tension or with the least amount of tension. In the process, he felt that both sides would benefit with minimum friction and maximum satisfaction.

To the foreging, the following two rights were added subsequently:

Right	To	Redressal
Right	To	Education

Consumer Rights Did Not Reach Developing Countries

The developed countries took note of these consumer rights and started implementing them; but, slowly. At the same time, they were watching the consumer awareness and moving according to demands. The consumer champions such as Ralph Nader were taking up the causes both in courts and public demonstrations-drawing public attention in national newspapers and through the media. The developing countries had three quarters of the world population. But, consumer rights declared by John Kennedy had not reached them in any perceptible way!!

United Nations & Their Role

For long, the UN has been concerned about the difficult conditions of the consumers especially in the third world countries. The declaration of Consumer Rights by the President of the United States had only achieved a limited purpose. Some of the Consumer Activists in countries such as Singapore, Malaysia & India were highlighting the violations of consumer rights. While they were able to arrest public attention, they were not able to achieve anything substantial. In the early 70s the author was the Chairman of the Consumer Guidance Society in Delhi with a High Court Lawyer as Secretary to the group. Our representations did not have much effect. When we carried public demonstrations in Delhi, there was some temporary response. For example, we were able to force "the display of prices" in grocery shops in the area where the demonstrations were held; we were able to check and correct weights & measures and bring a degree of awareness among small traders; but, not a lot more. We had to face threatening letters in return!!

Ecosoc & Its Concrete Steps

The Economic & Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) passed a resolution asking the Secretary General to place before it a Comprehensive Report on Consumer Protection for taking further action. I was appointed Consultant to handle the task.

It was labourious and time bound. The report was vetted by 32 U N Agencies such as ILO; UNIDO; FAO and so on; approved by the Secretary General, signed and placed before ECOSOC in 1981. After a very detailed discussion, the ECOSOC passed it on to General Assembly which approved the report unanimously and commended the same to all the 183 member Governments (countries) for adoption and follow up action.

Involvement of Organised Groups

The organised groups at world level had adequate opportunity to represent their points of views before the UN Consultant who was assigned the task of drafting the report. Some of the groups were active and made strong

representations. But some were casual and their inputs were minimal.

The International Chamber of Commerce, representing the trade and the manufacture world over, felt that they should be left unfettered; encouraged to grow especially in their risktaking innovations and business ventures and that they were already taking all reasonable steps necessary to protect consumer interests. They felt that legislative measures were always costly and never effective. They catalogued a number of legislations lying dormant not brought into effective use in many parts of the world!!

On the other hand, the consumer representatives—the International Organisation of Consumer Unions, felt strongly that declaration of Consumer Rights had not helped the consumers adequately. In their view, legislative measures were urgently needed to bring in any visible improvement. The suppliers of goods and services were subject to the law of contract: but, in the views of IOCU, the procedure was cumbersome, costly and time consuming and worked as a dis-incentive for any action by the consumers. Hence, the IOCU preferred a simple and inexpensive procedure for litigation and redressal.

The champions of the working class—the Trade Unions—at the world level were satisfied with their agitational approach aiming at higher wage and better working conditions. They did not address themselves to the manner in which money earned was spent. They were happy to leave the workers to decide for themselves in regard to securing "Value for Money" Bernard Shaw's statement that "any fool can earn: but, to spend it requires intelligence" did not appear to influence the organised labour!!

The apex organisation of the pharmaceutical manufacturers thought they were doing good work especially in their R&D efforts, production & manufacture as well as distribution of drugs all over. They prided themselves for manufacturing drugs after following Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) specially for the developed countries. They had no guilt feeling for producing drugs without following the GMP for the third world countries: for, in their view they were producing what the countries wanted!!

They were satisfied that the side effects of the medicine were indicated to the doctors who, in turn, were expected to tell the patients. Patients gulp the medicines and suffer the consequences and not the doctors! Where is consumer protection?

Consumer Perception Blurred!

In a super market 14,000 items are offered for sale. No one consumer can claim knowledge about these products. They purchase them not because they are needed: but, because they are attractive to look at; they are consumed by the neighbours' and they feel that they would be rated high only when they also consume the same. The fear of being left behind in the race for consumerism and the accompanying imaginary social climbing was used as a tool for heavy advertising for "demand creation" which was non-existent.

The marketing techniques of advertising etc. are applied continuously to blind and mesmerise the consumer. The consumer activists are not aware that consumers see only what they wish to see and not everything in the market!! With a blurred perception, consumers meekly walk into selection and buying of goods, not for use, but, for social climbing!!

The Most Painful Stocktaking

Today, let us do the painful stocktaking: John Kennedy's bold initiative in the declaration of consumer rights and the UN's efforts in producing a report to highlight the woes of consumers had one thing common: that the Producers (of goods & services) and Consumers should get closer to each other; develop an understanding about their inter dependence and sort out their differences by voluntary regulatory measures. This purpose has not been achieved!!! Picking one part of the UN report, the Governments rushed with their legislations, set up the Consumer Courts and perpetuated the rift between the warring groups.

An important part of the report pertaining to the application of "Regulatory measures" has not even been thought of. In some countries such as UK, certain watch dog organisations have come into being. Through mass media, they are able to highlight some of the violations of Consumer Rights for public consumption. In developing countries, the Consumer Activists with the willing cooperation of the mass media and governmental agencies have to initiate 'regulatory measures' and Watchdog Activities both for educating the Consumers as also to get the providers of goods & services closer to the Consumers-not at the Courts but at the Market Place.

Consumer Protection—A Management Tool

Many people think that the Consumer Protection Act is a liability. The Management has to incur additional costs to comply with the provisions of the legislation. A Doctor who was never questioned in the past is now held accountable before a court! The Chief General Manager of a Government Telephone Company is ordered to Jail for two years for violation of Consumer Rights!! The fact is that every manufacturing or business or service organisation in the Public or Private sector can aim at Consumer Satisfaction as their main objective.

If the railway considers punctuality their main concern; if the post office considers the prompt delivery of letters and parcels their major objective, customer satisfaction can be ensured. A satisfied customer is the greatest asset; the word of mouth publicity generated without cost is most effective!! This would help the business/industry grow faster and better and would carry the consumers all the way without ever going to Courts. ●

Anand S. Khati

Deputy General Manager (Law), Northern Railway.

Jim Corbett The Legend

Jim Corbett was convinced that "the tiger is a gentleman" and no jungle beast was dangerous while he lived in his natural habitat. For his outstanding contribution to conservation and natural history the Government of India bestowed on him the honour of "The Freedom of the Forests". (No bars, no boundaries, for a soul born free.)

Jim Corbett had lived his own life, truly not so simple, he made his mark in his early life as a soldier and a hunter but subsequently, dedicated himself to the preservation of life-human and wild. Something so pioneering that, the whole world will remain, ever indebted to him.

He was so dependable that whenever a maneater threatened a village, 'Carpet Sahib' was summoned. Moving on foot for days and weeks, often on steep winding trails, Corbett became the saviour of the simple hill folk of Kumaon and Garhwal.

Jim Corbett could read the jungle signs like an open book. He could decipher a ripple in the dust of a dry stream bed. A blade of grass caught in the act of springing back from a crushed position. When stalking, he could use the wind like predators do, to either conceal or reveal his presence. He could freeze stockstill in mid stride for any amount of time, just like an animal. He could easily read the sounds of the animals and could imitate them to perfection. Even the call of a tiger! With no assistance apart from his vocal chords, he could lure the animal to a face to face meeting. Two maneaters shot by him were cornered using this awesome ability.

Jim Corbett, the eighth child of a postmaster, gave up on academics early, proved his prowess at the gun at the age of 8. He worked as storekeeper, labour contractor, Captain in World War I, member of municipal board, and trained soldiers in jungle warfare for World War II, was awarded the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He shot with his camera and chronicled his experiences in 8 gripping books.

On the edge of the Park is a place called Kaladhungi, where Jim Corbett lived and learnt to use the gun. Jim's house is now a museum. Surrounding this modest dwelling is a tiny village

James Edward Corbatt

(1875-1955)

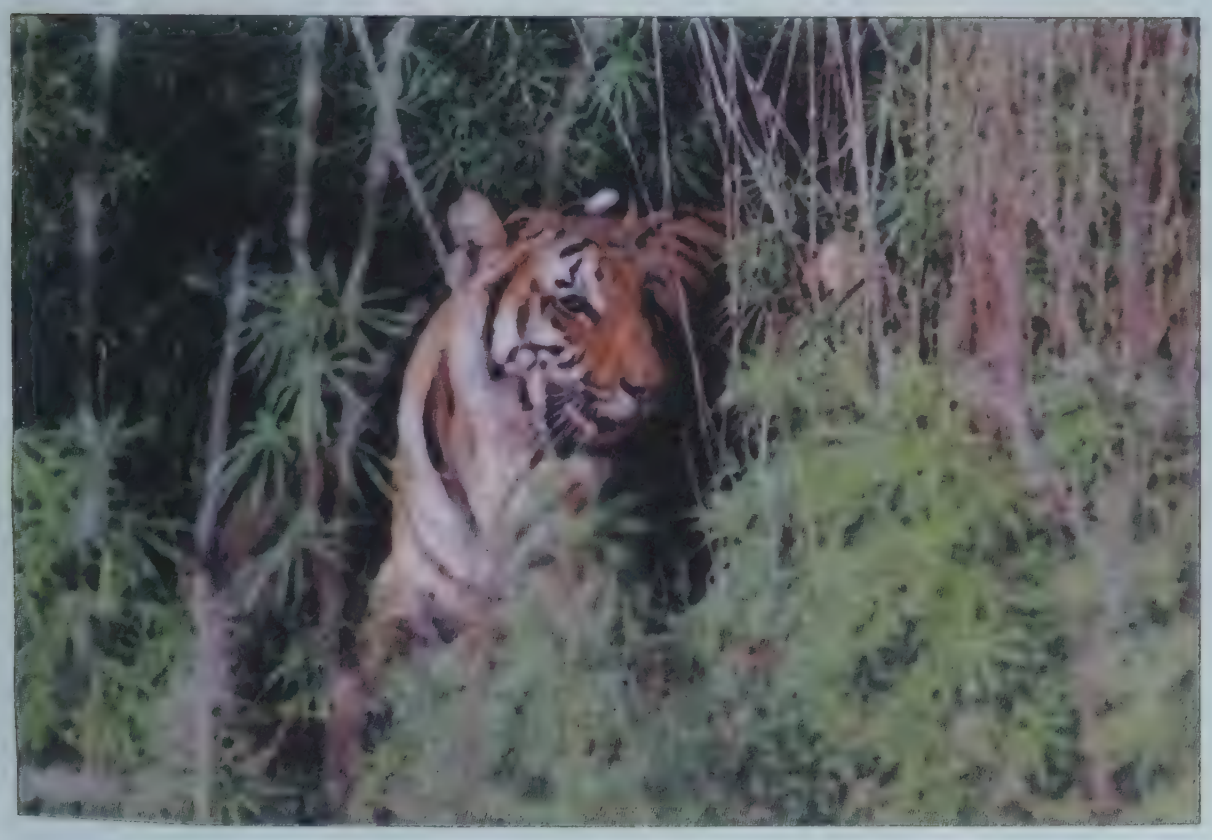
called 'Chhota Haldwani'. Part of the village land was bought by Jim Corbett out of his own savings and gifted to the villagers.

If you happen to meet the older residents, they will tell you tall tales about the man who became a legend in his lifetime. Truly it will remind you of incomparable commitment of Jim Corbett to the region and people of the area. In 1907, he killed a man-eating tiger... one of the many man eaters he was destined to kill. But Jim retained a 'compassion' even for man-eaters, as he realised that they killed humans only to appease the most primary instinct of hunger because some disability or injury prevented them from catching their normal prey. In many cases the disability or injury was inflicted by humans. The Government had granted him the 'freedom of the forests'. With his great abilities he became the first naturalist in India to start daylight photography of tigers in their natural habitat. In 1929 he produced a number of excellent films which he later gifted to the Natural History Museum in London. On 19th April 1955, he passed away to the 'Happy Hunting Grounds' and was buried at Nyeri in the same graveyard as Lord Baden Powell.

The Icon, James Edward Corbett, better known to the world as Jim Corbett, was born at Nainital on 25th July 1875 in the legendary Corbett family.

He was the eighth child of his mother, Mary Jane Corbett from her second marriage, who married his father Christopher Corbett after the death of her first husband, Mr Doyle. The Corbett, had three sons and two daughters. James Edward, popularly known as Jim Corbett was a famous naturalist who spent most of his life in India, particularly in its lush jungles. He had his childhood, schooling in the hills of Kumaon in Uttaranchal. He went to school at the English High School in Nainital. After completing his schooling he joined Indian Railways and worked for almost twenty years. Later he joined Indian arm force and during World War I, he led the 70th Kumaon Labour Corps in France. In World War II, he, as in the earlier war helped recruit local men from the hills of Kumaon and trained troops in jungle fighting. At later stage in his life he eventually migrated to Kenya and died in Nairobi.

Corbett habitat.



A tiger sheltering in a thick surrounding in Jim Corbett Park.

Jim's personality was extraordinary. He was quite well versed in jungle craft, an art he developed his own with perfection. He was so perfect in it that he could accurately interpret and imitate the noises of the beasts and birds in the Indian jungle (primarily at Tarai region in the foothills of Kumaon. His best legacy is his several books on his experiences in these jungles. He had great love & regard for the wildlife, especially for the Indian tiger. He was deemed as an expert and was often called upon to help in hunting maneater tigers that had turned maneaters due to injuries or other reasons.

The Beginning

Jim couldn't enjoy love & affection of his father Christopher Corbett, a minor official,

as he died when Jim was only four years old. The difficult task of bringing up the large combined family fell on his mother Mary Jane Corbett and her older son Tom, who worked in the Post Office at Nainital.

The Corbett family were domiciled residents of India, with no properties in Britain. Thus for obvious reasons, irrespective of their being purebred Britishers, socially they were in disadvantage as not considered completely equal by the ruling British establishment who were previleged in going 'back home' to be educated in British public schools and were able to retain their upperclass accents & stature.

Most of the year Jim's family lived at their residence, Gurney House on the Ayarpata Hill at Nainital, however to avoid chilly winter months they used to live at their home at Kaladhungi, at the foot hills. This Kaladhungi abode of Jim's is now museum in his memory with all kind of memorabilia, attracts tourists from all over the Globe.

Python in a rare scene at Corbett.

The Childhood

The Corbett family was not very wealthy and were suspect to have faced financial strain, but by all accounts Jim's childhood years were happy ones. It was an idyllic life for a young boy, paddling in streams, fishing, playing, climbing tree exploring the open air surrounding, climbing back to an affectionate, pleasant home filled with a caring large family. During his constant wandering through the forests Jim learnt instinctively by careful observation, the ways of birds, insects and animals. This perfect surrounding developed an inexplicable 'sixth sense' which, as he mentions in his books, warned him of danger and saved his life many times.

Jim's upbringing in the midst of the local community also instilled in him a deep love of India and particularly for Kumaon and its honest, simple, sturdy hill folk. As his confessions in his book *My India*, largely confines to Kumaon and its people, a fundamental facet of his best known creation. An interesting and honest revelation.

Early at the age of five years, Jim joined Philander Smith's School at Nainital. This school is now defunct and houses another school, the Birla Vidya Mandir. At this school only, Jim was initiated into the use of a fire arm and by the time he reached at the age of ten years he was youngest member of the school company, 'the Nainital Volunteer Rifles'. Keeping his keen interest in mind and to encourage him, the officer in charge of the squad loaned him a military carbine rifle. This enabled him to wander alone deep in the jungles. These early years in life of Jim were valuable, he describes these years in his book Jungle Lore and it can clearly be seen how they moulded his character and habits and made him what he later became, a turning point indeed.

The Railway Days

After completion of schooling at the age of fifteen years, the adolescent Jim did not go on to college but looked around for a job. He succeeded and in 1893 joined the Bengal Railway Company as a Fuel Inspector, and was posted at Mokamaghat in Bihar. His starting salary was only Rs. 100 per month, later raised to Rs. 150 per month when he was promoted to the Transhipment Inspector. Jim had a long career with the railways and worked for the railway company for twenty years. It was a hard life for Corbett as one, the company was not only a poor paymaster, but salaries were not paid on time, sometimes delayed as much as six months. Unlike his other experience, Jim hardly speaks of his life with the company, and one can guess that he did not care to recall this somewhat unhappy period, although a relationship of twenty years is very significant. Probably in this background circumstances only, Jim preferred to remain unmarried. He stayed together with his unmarried sister Maggie throughout their lives.

The Champion of Have-nots

Jim has many facets of his life, he was truly a reformer and concerned person as even in his difficulties he used to support kinds of needy people. Once on the platform of the Mokamaghat railway station, Jim found a man dying of cholera. He forthwith in his own style picked up this poor, unknown, unfortunate man and took him to his house, irrespective of knowing, cholera is a very messy disease (was then also very dangerous as today's wonder drugs had not been discovered). The kind of concern Jim showed for him was highly admirable as Jim not only nursed him back to health but on his recovery also lent him Rs. 500 for a start-up business, an extra-ordinary gesture indeed, as most amazingly this happened at a time when he himself was in difficult financial circumstances, a very unusual gesture with compassion and love for the poor.

He was in continuous touch with locals in the park's surrounding (there are many stories remembered by local people). One narration reflects the level of recognition then available to Jim Corbett as a messiah of people, as in the year 1907, while he was only 33, at home on leave from work, Jim was called upon by the then Deputy Commissioner, Nainital, to rescue from an emergency situation by killing a man-eating tiger having created a menance which had in four years killed more than two hundred people. This man-eater had really created havoc as all previous attempts had been made on it, were turned in vain. He accepted the challenge but with a condition that the award announced for the purpose be cancelled. Jim with his extraordinary patience, perseverance and courage killed this tiger known as the Champawat's Man Eater, his last 'Man Eater' which he shot in 1938 at the age of 63 years, one covered in his creative titles. For readers' reference all gory details on these episodes are available on Jim Corbett's books e.g. *Man-eaters of Kumaon, and The Man Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag.*

Hunter of Maneaters

In an unconventional manner Jim was totally involved with the local community and worked for their welfare. The happy scenes, the relief and the joy that Jim saw on the faces of the poor folk on being released from the ever-present dread of a man-eater made Jim into the hunter of man-eaters for which he is best remembered. Many a tense and nerve wrecking time was spent by him in tracking down his quarry, and often he was the hunted and not the hunter. He was past his youth and 'hot blood' and yet faced alone the strain of being in places where every boulder, every bush, every overhanging branch and every bend in the road could have concealed violent death. In his missions he generally went alone because he did not want to endanger others, and in most cases would have had added responsibilities of protecting them too. Thus Corbett was the true Messiah for the local people.

While committed for the humans Jim retained a 'compassion' even for man-eaters, as he could realise that they were forced to kill humans only to appease the most primary instinct of hunger because some disability or injury prevented them from catching their normal prey. This handicap (disability or injury) in many cases was inflicted by humans only. Thus contrary to his childhood years of ignorance, Jim did not kill things want only. His contributions in many ways are inspiratory as amongst his major contributions is his firm advocacy for the preservation of forest and wildlife i.e. People saw in him a Pioneer Conservationist. In a very unprecedented manner he persisted in this right to the end, particularly at a time when it was not a popular cause, when forests and forest resources were considered as an infinite source for man to exploit, and when shooting was the most popular sporty. Jim will always be remembered for his farsightedness, a milestone in the Indian Conservation Movement.

Later during beginning of the First World War (1914), Jim recruited 5000 men for the Indian Labour Corps, and later took 500 of them to France, to whom 499 returned (one died on the ship because of illness). He was given the rank of Major in 1918. He also fought in the Waziristan campaign in what is now Pakistan.

The Messiah

Later on return from the War, Jim preferred to settle down at Kaladhungi to look after his lands. In 1920, he was nominated as a member of the Municipal Board, Nainital, and he served on the board till 1944. This was in many ways the most productive part of his life, when he blossomed and matured. It was truly, the most valuable period of his life as most of the events he has written occurred during this period when he was not bound down to working for anyone else, and came and went and did as he pleased. Unfortunately bad luck striked him again as life took its own turn & one setback he faced in 1924 was death of his mother, Mary Jane Corbett, who lies burried in the cemetery of St. John's in the wilderness at Nainital.

Under all odds Jim continued with his mission and later in life reclaimed land from the jungle, constructed protective walls and settled forty poor village families on these lands, merely as a goodwill gesture. He was such a great soul that he not only transferred the ownership but even continued to pay the land revenue (tax) for the lands he had gifted away. The other welfare measures he undertook included opening of dispensaries at both his homes with the help of his sister Maggie, where free treatment was provided to the poor. He gave due importance to the education of local people and opened a High School at Kaladhungi. Indian Mythology also drawn his attention as he was influenced by the *Gita* and the

Ramayan and celebrated Hindu festivals, especially Durga Puja with people.

The True Reformer

At Nainital, Kaladhungi & surrounding areas Jim was all in one for the people. As a Municipal Board Member, he commanded general respect because he was ever-ready to help the needy and was easily approachable. The kind of pain he was able to take for an ordinary human being was exemplary.

He was highly concerned about the grass root problems & to improve situation he specially tried to improve conditions in the Hindi medium schools which educated the bulk of the populatin. He was also partly responsible for allowing Indians to use the main play ground at Nainital, and 'the Flats' of today and to walk on the upper Mall Road (the Mall of today) which was closed to them till 1932.

Recognition

The Government granted him the 'freedom of the forests'. Jim with his great abilities he became the first naturalist in India to start daylight photography of tiger in their natural habitat. In 1929 he acquired a movie camera and produced a number of excellent films which he later gifted to the Natural History Museum in London. Thus Jim who, throughout his life time and again put his life at risk, eliminating one man-eater after another, had many firsts in his life.

Although a borned Naturalist, Jim Corbett's association with army also continued later in life as during the early part of the Second World War, Jim trained troop and was promoted to the rank of Lt. Colonel. However due to ill health he was forced to give up this work, and returned to Nainital.

Corbett the Hunter, turned social reformer, turned conservationist began writing in early 1940's, and published *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*, his first and most famous book. Here too he was very generous as the royalties of most of his books were gifted to the blind, a charity close to his heart. Various other charities benefited from his generosity that to when Jim himself was never in a good financial health. Such a commitment for the cuase was supreme and unresistable.

The Belated Honour

He was everybody's man as he was at ease with everybody, he was a friend to every villager of Kaladhungi and sat on the Panchayat (village council) giving his advice and suggestions and he delighted in the company of the artless simple hill folk. He lived for months with them in their remote villages and shared their hospitality during his travels in search of man-eaters. This brought him very close to them in spirit. Though much sought after by Government officials whenever there w a problem, and called upon to rub shoulders with the highest the land including the Viceroy and the Governor whenever th visited the forests, he was for most of his life never treated b the ruling elite as a full social equal. Only towards the very e did this barrier break down somewhat, when his books had brought him immense fame, and he had been honoured with Kaiser-I-Hind Gold Medal, the Cross of the Star of India, and the Order of the British Empire.

Ram Ganga river is the choicest place for the elephants at Corbett.

Spotted deer at Corbett.

Although a towering personality, Jim was a simple and reserved man, he kept his emotions in check. Irrespective of the fact that he was a well-known figure to each and every resident of Nainital, he had only a few close friends, drawn from those who shared his love of nature. Amongst his close friends were the Ibbostosons, and some others.

The Unfortunate Migration

Unfortunately, later in life Jim was persuaded by them to think on the line that with independence Indians who were treated over the years discriminately may retaliate. Jim had been regularly visiting and working in East Africa since the 1920s. With the urging of the Ibbostsons supported by Maggie, and with the incentives offered in Kenya for farming and safaris, Jim was somehow persuaded to migrate there permanently. He began to prepare for this.

The Emotional Parting

At the end of his stay Jim gifted his lands away. He virtually gifted, for a small sum, his Kaladhungi home to an Indian friend and gave the money so received to build a Panchayat Ghar (village Council House) and sold his home, Gurney House, Nainital, to the Verma family who still own it. He later revealed that he buried his guns somewhere on its grounds. In a very unusual manner (In the early hours of one day) in September 1946 while most people were still asleep (thus avoiding emotional outbursts), Jim and Maggie forever left Gurney House where they had been born and brought up. Jim was then 71 years of age. Indisputably it must have been the most unfortunate moment for Jim who lived so committedly in India.

The Kenyan Stay

The Corbetts in Kenya, settled at Nyeri and lived in the house built by Lord Baden Powell, the father of scouting. Jim was appointed an Honorary Game warden and was granted special permission to enter restricted forest reserves. But he kept in touch with events and friends in India. His correspondence reveals remarkable foresight about future trends in India. Thus the extraordinary love he had for India remained forever.

The Company of Princess/Queen Elizabeth II

A very significant development occurred in Jim's life as in a occasion when he was with the Princess Elizabeth when she climbed up into the now world famous 'Tree Tops' for night-time viewing of wildlife. During that night, King George VI died quietly in his sleep in London, and when Jim came down, it was with Queen Elizabeth II. Later, Jim wrote a book appropriately titled *Tree Tops*, about his African experiences.

Farewell to Legendary Jim Corbett

As per the reports available it appears that Jim was not entirely 'at home' in Kenya, because he wrote to friends about his intentions to return to India and he appeared to be very serious about. He wrote to Shri Charanji Lal, the new owner of his Kaladhungi house to buy back the property, but all this was not happen as he had been in poor health for some years. On 19th April 1955, after pain in his heart had forced him into hospital for one day, he passed away to the 'Happy Hunting Grounds' and was buried at Nyeri in the same graveyard as Lord Baden Powell. His sister Maggie followed him eight years later, in 1963. The greatness of this man and his love for India did not ended as in his will, Jim bequeathed Rs. 10,000 to the temple at Almora and Rudraprayag, and the mosque at Kaladhungi. Not only this he always remained concerned about the people in Kaladhungi as he made provision for each and every villager of Kaladhungi (everyone received a sum of money).

Thus Corbett was an institution in himself and deserves best possible recognition in the World. Some of the popular books by Col. Corbett which can be referred to have first hand idea of his creative acumen and greatness, are:

(i) *Man-eaters of Kumaon*

(ii) *The Man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag*

(iii) *My India*

(iv) *Jungle Lore*

Recognition in India

In this background we can truly say that Indian Government truly recognised his contribution in the Indian Wildlife Arena by naming the first Indian National Park as "Jim Corbett National Park" as in 1935, Jim had helped to establish India's first National Park, then named 'Hailey National Park' (After independence, it had been renamed as 'Ramganga National Park'). It was indeed a great tribute to the man, who in the days of infamous hunting trips of the Maharajas, waged a battle that India still fights... The battle to save the majestic Indian tiger and other wildlife" a blazing reality indeed.

The Nature's Exclusive Paradise

The home of the Royal Bengal Tigers, Corbett National Park is part of famous & scenic Patlidun Valley.

On a holiday at the Corbett National Park one can go on a safari. Or on a walking trail. One can experience the thrill of rafting down the Ramganga. Or just lounging on its silver banks, watching the water flow dreamily by. Punctuated, now and then, by the leap of the mighty Mahseer (October to

June). May be, one can even catch one. As night falls, it is an unique experience to gather around a blazing fire and listen to the tales of 'Corbett Country'.

It really makes the difference in managing a trip away from the pressures of city life, with a long, leisurely weekend in the middle of Corbett country with its rolling foothills, thick jungle, the sparkling Ramganga river, the possibility of catching sight of wildlife and the invigorating air is the additional advantage. The Corbett ambience is a simple retreat for city-weary Indians and wildlife-loving travellers, far away from the hustle-bustle of routine life.

Truly, a few days of pure heaven-the terrific surroundings, the real oxygen, the excellent food, the comfortable accommodation, the fishing arrangements that are outstanding and above all the warm hospitality, which can be arranged through park authorities or travel agents having their arrangement through various recognised resorts in the park surrounding. The idyllic Corbett Park in District Nainital & Pauri Garhwal of Uttar Pradesh (Uttrakhand region) is set amidst thick forests of sal, khair and sisoo trees, dense bushes of lantana and other mild creepers in the picturesque Ramganga Valley.

The tiger, leopard, elephant, wild boar, chital, sambhar, gural, hog deer, barking deer, jungle cat, jackal, hare etc. along with 500 species of resident and migratory birds reside in this park (Zoological Survey of India).

Thus established in 1936 as India's first national park, Corbett is famous for its wide varied wildlife and its beautiful location in the foothills of the Himalayas by the Ramganga River, which with the recent inclusion of the Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary to the west, has grown from 520 to 1318 sq.kms. It may seem incongruous for a national park to be named after a famous British hunter turned conservator-Jim Corbett is best known for his book *The Man-Eaters of Kumaon*. More commonly seen wildlife includes the wild elephant, langur monkey, rhesus macaque, peacock, and several types of deer including chital, sambars, hog deer and barking deer. There are also crocodiles, the gharial, monitor lizards, wild boars and jackals. Corbett is also a bird-watcher's paradise, and since the creation of the Kalagarh Dam on the Ramganga river, large numbers of waterfowl have been attracted here. Corbett is open from mid-November to mid-June.

One can opt for Forest Rest Houses, Corbett Riverside Resort, Claridges, Corbett Hideaway, Tiger Tops Corbett Lodge for stay and avail rail or bus service to arrive here as, Ramnagar is connected by train with Moradabad and by bus with Delhi, Lucknow, Nainital and Ranikhet. Tour operators also have their own arrangements.

Varied topography of Corbett, comprises hilly and riverine areas, temporary marshy depressions, plateaus and ravines. The lower areas are almost completely populated by sal trees. In park are found 110 tree species, 50 mammals species, 600 b species and 26 reptile species".

"Corbett is a haven for tigers with its plentiful prey-four kinds of deer, wild pig (boar) and lesser animals. Leopards a found in the hilly areas of the park but often do not cross pat with tigers in their territories. Some nocturnal cats found her are the leopard cat, jungle cat and fishing cat. Sloth bear is found in the lower regions of the park while the Himalayan black bear is seen in the higher hills only. The dhole (wild do though rare, can be seen in the southern areas of the park alo with the jackal. Some of the smaller residents of the park are Himalayan palm civet, Indian gray mongoose, common otter, blacknaped hare and porcupine. Elephants (solitary bulls and breeding herds) are one of the main attractions of Corbett. Along the Ramganga river shores, one can spot the long-snouted, fish-eating gharial crocodile and the mugger crocodi Also seen on the rocky hillsides is the goral (goat-antelopes). The langur and rhesus monkeys are well distributed through o the park and also warn the jungle with alarm calls when they see either a tiger or leopard from tree-top perches".

"Its main purpose has been to protect the plant and animal life in the valley of the Ramganga river, especially the endangered Bengal tiger, of which there are now about 100 in the park, and the gharial, a species of fish-eating crocodile. Created by the British imperial authorities, Corbett National Park is the oldest national park in India: (*Encatra Encyclopedia*).

"Jim Corbett National Park, a WWF supported Project Tig Reserve in India, is named after Jim Corbett, the legendary hunter turned conservationist. The Park covers 520 sq.kms. of which 320 sq.kms. is the core area, closed to human traffic an 200 kms. is the buffer area. Apart from the National Park, the tiger reserve includes an additional 798 sq.kms. Corbett National park is famous the world over as the 'Land of the trumpet, roar and song'.

The Park has a spectacular bird diversity. Peacock, kaleej pheasant, block partridge, pallas's fishing eagle, white collared falconet, storkbilled kingfisher, wall creeper, brown fish owl, brown eared and block bulbul and several species of woodpeckers & parakeets ore some of the attractive birds foun within Corbett National Park. In 1966 an additional area was added to Corbett National Park bringing it to its present area o 520.82 sq.kms. Corbett Tiger Reserve is spread over 1318.54 sq.kms. and includes apart from Corbett National Park, additional areas of Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary and Reserve Forest buffer zone.

Other facilities include a museum at Kaladhungi and the Dhangarhi visitor centre at Dhangarhi Gate, interpretation centre at Birjani and library at Dhikala".

MAKING OF JIM CORBETT PARK

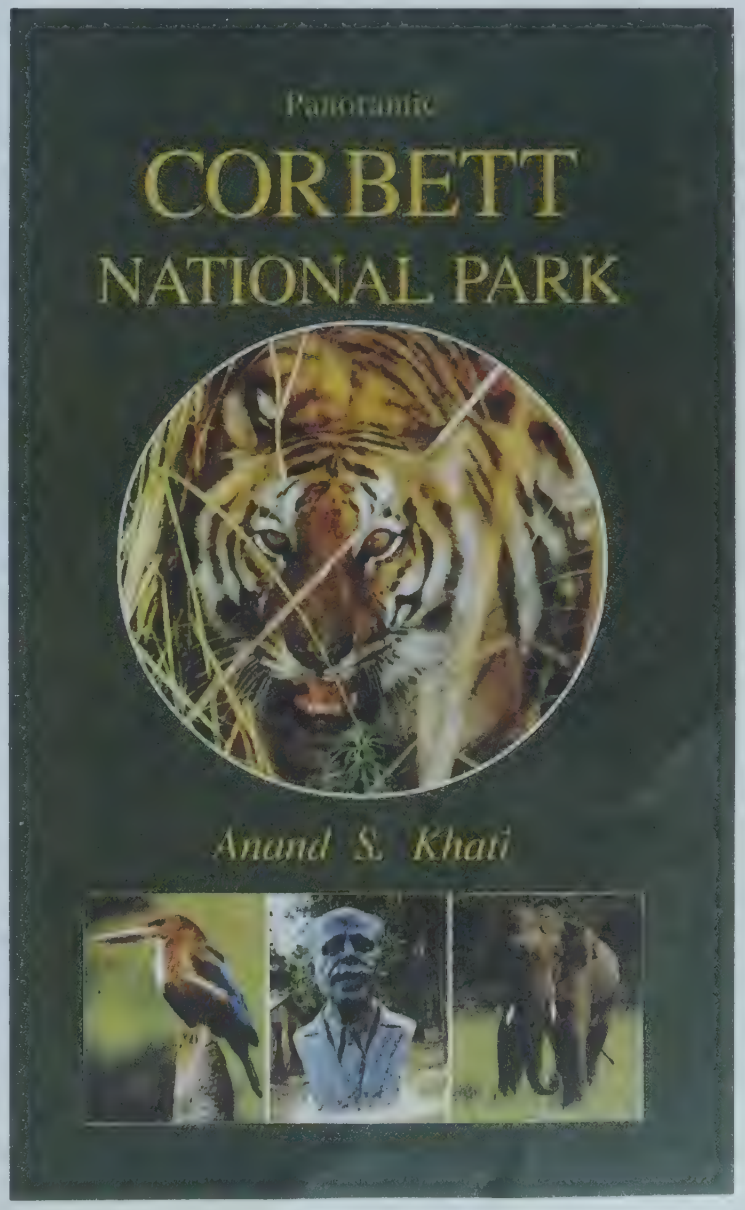
Panoramic Corbett National Park : By Anand S. Khati, published by Pelican Creations International, P.O.Box 524, Sector 37, NOIDA-201 303. Pp. 248. Price Rs. 395 (Foreword by Maneka Gandhi).

INDIA has as many as 81 National Parks and more than 434 sanctuaries. The Jim Corbett National Park is first in this galaxy which was set up as far back as 1936. It also enjoys a history of being the first tiger reserve declared in 1973. The park has wild life resorts, 550 mammal species, 600 birds species and 26 reptile species. By all means it is a model for wildlife reserves in India.

The Corbett National Park, as it is known in short in the country, is not only an exciting wildlife resort to visit but also of great significance for exploration and research. Shri Khati has done a laudable research into the subject and presented an authentic picture of Corbett Park, its history, account of wildlives in the park and guidance to the visitors.

The forest of the Corbett National Park was the private property of local rulers during early 19th century. The ownership passed on to the British Government after 1820. The first comprehensive plan to protect the forest was drawn during 1860s. The Governor of United Provinces Sir Malcon Hailey made efforts to get National Park status to the declared reserve forest. The park was first named Hailey's National Park in 1936. After the death of Jim Corbett in 1955, it was renamed as Corbett National Park in honour of his memory. The Park has over 495 sq. kms. of reserve forest.

Situated in the Himalayan foot hills of Nainital and Pauri Garhwal, the Corbett National Park has rare varieties of flora and fauna. Among the wild animals to be seen in the park are cheetal, barking deer, tiger, elephant etc. Khati has discussed all the species of the wild animals available in the park. He has given colourful pictures of the species and tourist lodges for the accommodation of the visitors. He has also given useful tips for the bird watchers. Corbett park and its surrounding have great potential for eco tourism in the country.



The author has given details of the possibilities of the development of the area for eco tourism including those of mountaineering expedition and trekking. He however wants that eco tourist initiatives in the region need thoughtful planning and very careful monitoring and implementation. The book also documents rare data and statistics of the animals and the plants at not only Jim Corbett Park but also other important places of the country.

Eventually the volume emerges as an authentic reference book for the wildlife lovers and the researches in the subject. A separate chapter devoted to Jim Corbett is an additional attraction of the book which unfolds the exciting life and personality of Col. Corbett and his precious contribution to the folks of Kumaon and the country. The book is a welcome arrival and an indispensable treatise for any library that boasts of adventure literature.

—Manohar D. Banerjee

Uncle Ken on the Run

Ruskin Bond

"Don't let your tongue cut your throat."

—Granny's Kitchen Proverbs

"If you don't have courage, you should have strong legs."

—Uncle Ken

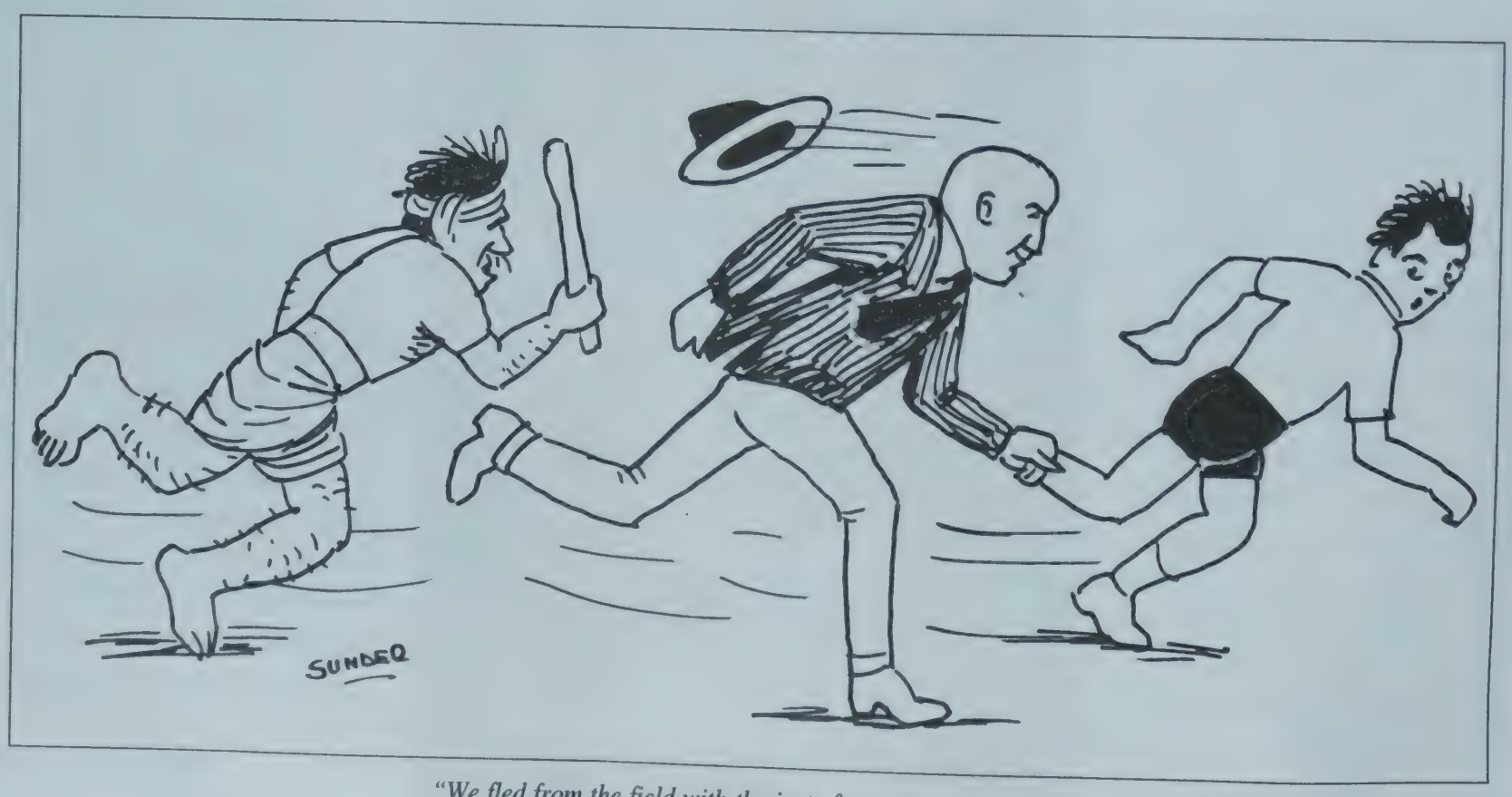
UNCLE Ken got through life without ever holding a job for more than a few months at a time—and that was an achievement in itself.

His stint with the Raja of J—has been recorded elsewhere, while his work for Naval Intelligence (which resulted in a submarine ramming into the Gateway of India) can only be made public at some later date. But there is no dearth of material on my favourite uncle, whose life was varied and colourful although seldom fruitful.

Even when I was a boy, with a penchant for writing stories short and tall, he'd say, "One day you'll write a book about me, Rusty. Just you wait and see!"

He doesn't really deserve a book to himself, but I've put him in several stories and here's an early episode from his life and times tha I like to recall.

Sitting in the sun on a winter's afternoon, feeling my age just a little (I'm sixty-seven now), I began remembering my boyhood i the Dehra of long ago, and I found myself missing the old times—friends of my youth, my grandmother, our neighbours, interesting characters in our small town, and, of course, my eccentric relative—dashing young Uncle Ken!



"We fled from the field with the irate farmer going chase."

Yes, Dehra Doon was a small town then—uncluttered, uncrowded, with quiet lanes and pretty gardens and shady orchards. Like all north Indian towns, it also had a crowded city area, one bright and noisy bazaar leading into another, and tiny lanes intersecting each other. Parts of an old city wall remained, but the bazaar had burst through it, spilling over into the open spaces near the railway station and police lines.

The railway had reached Dehra in 1900, bringing many settlers into the valley, for it was considered a good place for retirement. Among them was my maternal grandfather, who had himself served in the Railways. He had five daughters, the youngest being my mother—and one son, my Uncle Ken.

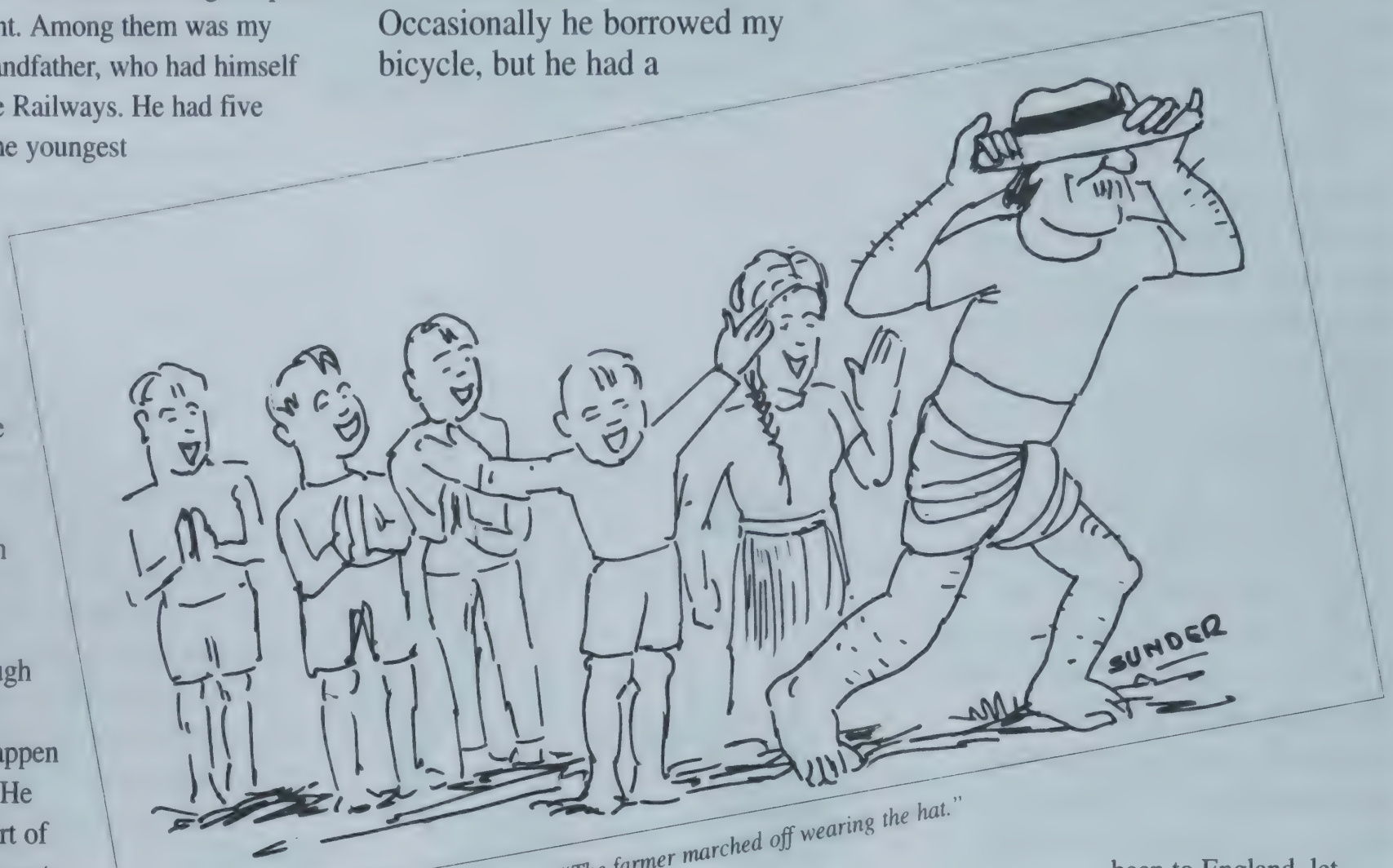
Uncle Ken was one of those people who went through life without having to do much, although a great deal seemed to happen around him. He acted as a sort of catalyst for events that involved the family, friends, neighbours, the town itself. He believed in the fruits of hard work: other people's hard work.

Good looking as a boy, Ken's sisters doted on him. He took full advantage of their devotion, and, as the girls grew up and married, Ken took it for granted that they and their husbands wiykd continue to look after his welfare. You could say he was the originator of the Welfare State; his own.

I'll say this for Uncle Ken, he had a large fund of curiosity in his nature, and he loved to explore the town we lived in, and any other town or city where he might happen to find himself. With one sister settled in Lucknow, another in Ranchi, a third in Bhopal, a fourth in Pondicherry, and a fifth in Barrackpore, Uncle Ken managed to see a cross-section of India by dividing his time between all his sisters and their long-suffering husbands.

Uncle Ken liked to walk. Occasionally he borrowed my bicycle, but he had a tendency to veer off the main road and into ditches. Dehra was full of ditches, which were made to carry away the rain water. The water was usually very muddy, so falling into them was better when they were dry. But after a collision with a bullock-cart, in which he tore his trousers and damaged the handlebar of my bicycle, Uncle Ken concluded that walking was the best way of getting around Dehra.

Uncle Ken dressed quite smartly for a man of no particular occupation. He had a blue-striped blazer and a red-striped blazer; he usually wore white or off-white trousers, immaculately pressed (by Granny). He was the delight of shoeshine boys, for he was always having his shoes polished. Summers he wore a straw hat, telling everyone he had worn it for the Varsity Boat Race, while rowing for Oxford (he hadn't been to England, let alone Oxford); winters, he wore one of Grandfather's old felt hats. He seldom went bareheaded. At thirty he was almost completely bald, prompting Aunt Mabel to remark: "Well, Ken, you must be grateful for small mercies. At least you'll never have bats getting entangled in your hair."



"The farmer marched off wearing the hat."

Thanks to all his walking Ken had a good digestion, which kept pace with a hearty appetite. Our walks would be

punctuated by whistle-stops at chaat shops, sweet shops, fruit stalls, confectioners, small bakeries and other eateries.

"Have you brought any pocket money along?" he would ask, for he was usually broke.

"Granny gave me five rupees."

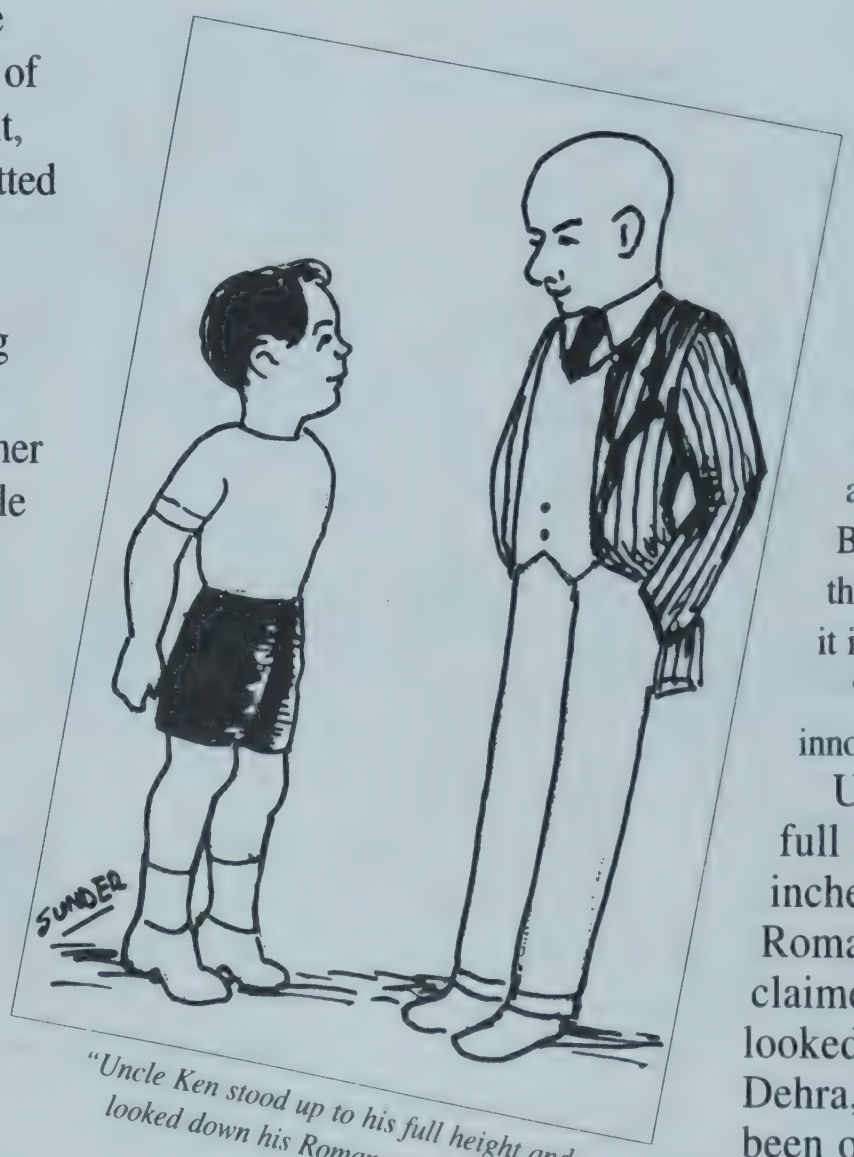
"We'll try some *ras-gullas*, then."

And the *ras-gullas* would be followed by *gulabjamuns* until my five rupees was finished. Uncle Ken received a small allowance from Granny, but he ferreted it away to spend on clothes, preferring to spend my pocket money on perishables such as ice-creams, *kulfis* and Indian sweets.

On one occasion, when neither of us had any money, Uncle Ken decided to venture into a sugar-cane field on the outskirts of the town. He had broken off a stick of cane, and was busy chewing at it, when the owner of the field spotted us and let out a volley of imprecations. We fled from the field with the irate farmer giving chase. I could run faster than Uncle Ken, and did so. The farmer would have caught up with Uncle Ken if the latter's hat hadn't blown off, causing a diversion. The farmer picked up the hat, examined it, seemed to fancy it, and put it on. Several small boys clapped and cheered. The farmer marched off, wearing the hat, and Uncle Ken wisely decided against making any attempt to retrieve it.

"I'll get another one," he said philosophically.

"Uncle Ken dressed quite smartly for a man of no particular occupation. He had a blue-striped blazer and a red-striped blazer; he usually wore white or off-white trousers, immaculately pressed (by Gramy). He was the delight of shoeshine boys, for he was always having his shoes polished."



"Uncle Ken stood up to his full height and looked down his Roman nose at me."

He wore a pith helmet, or sola topee, for some time, as he thought it would protect him from sticks and stones. For some time he harboured a paranoia that all the sugar-cane farmers in the valley were looking for him, to avenge his foray into their fields. But after some time he discarded the topee because, according to him, it interfered with his good looks.

"What good looks?" I asked innocently.

Uncle Ken stood up to his full height (all of five foot, six inches) and looked down his Roman nose at me. At least he claimed it was a Roman nose. It looked just like any other nose in Dehra, and they couldn't all have been of Roman descent. ●

K. Krishnan
Dy. Secretary (D), Railway Board.

My Experiments with Truth

"He who enjoys good health is rich though he knows it not"

—Proverb

THE ways and means of achieving good health have been encapsulated by the poet in the following couplet:

"Bhojan aadha peth kar
Do gun paani peeva
Thigun Shram, Chowgun hansee
Varsh sava sau jeeva"

With the sole but selfish objective of achieving good health, I set upon to put the above precept into practice. Simply put, to be healthy, one should take food in moderation, take sufficient water, do regular exercise and be cheerful. To supplement my knowledge on the subject, I started reading all the relevant literature and consulted important people.

"Take plenty of water, at least 3 litres a day. It will cleanse your system of all toxins and bring glow on your face. Apart from draining out impurities from the body, water also acts as a great therapeutic agent. In fact it can be considered the elixir of life itself." The people who mattered such as parents and peers, ayurvedic and allopathic physicians, homoeopaths and naturopaths thus unanimously exhorted the virtues of water.

The beneficial effects of water having been established beyond doubt, I decided to start water therapy seriously. The next day, immediately on getting up from bed, I ran to the water jug as a man possessed. I gulped one glass of water and in a frenzy another glass and yet another. My belly bulged and the bulged belly seemed like an inflated baloon giving me a menacing and frightening look of being deflated by a pinprick. Would my belly be torn asunder? I got panicky. But that was not the time to harbour such doubts. After all, one has to pay a small price for bringing glow on one's face. So I was prepared to undergo some amount of uneasiness arising out of the water therapy for the larger good. The water therapy continued

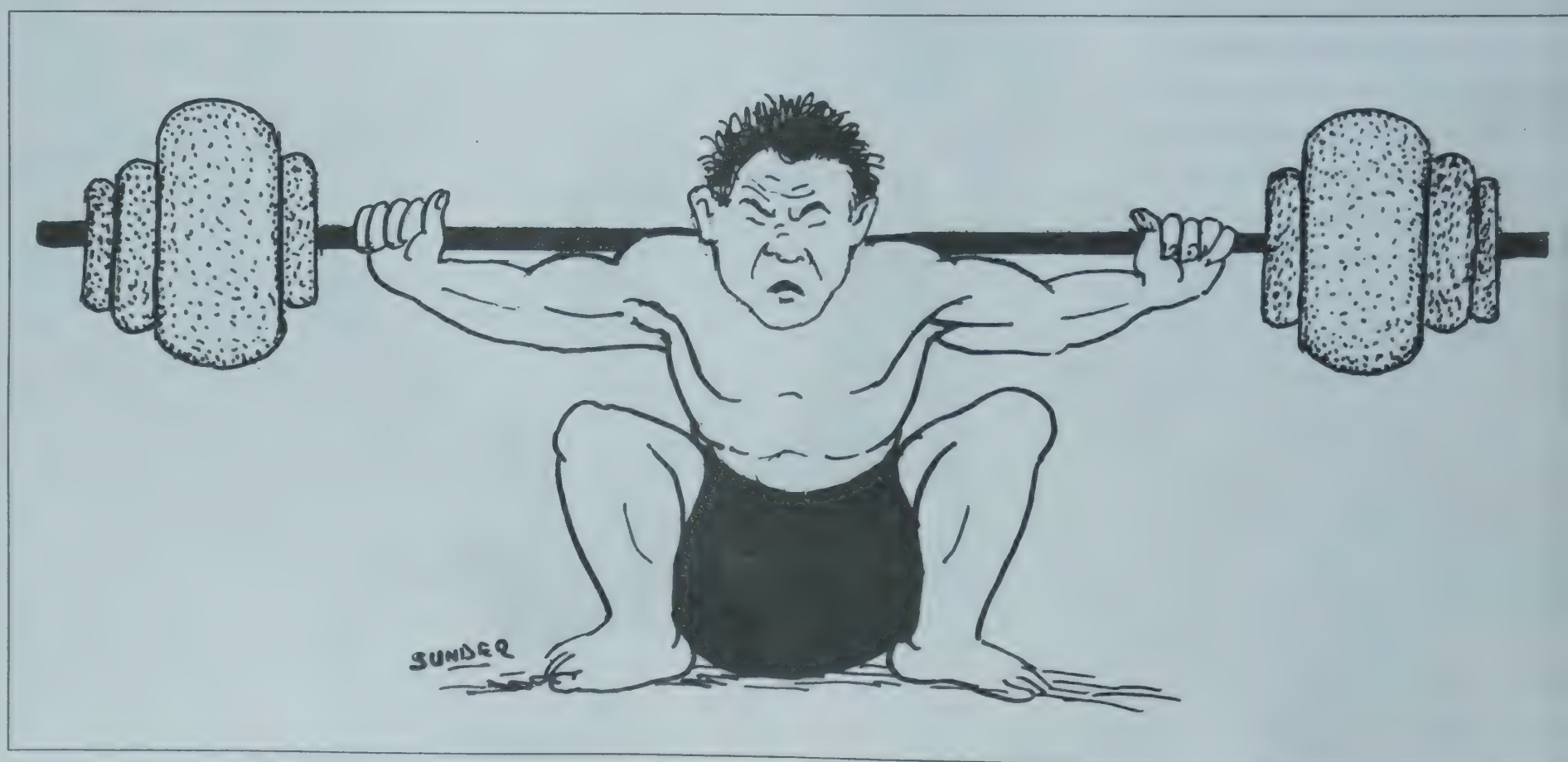
"My belley bulged and the bulged belly seemed like an inflated baloon....."

for a few days uninterrupted till I met a doctor friend who advised that as per the latest research, excessive intake of water was detrimental to health. With an air of authority and confidence associated only with professionals, he narrated the deleterious effect of excess water on the human system. "Excess consumption of water would lead to hyponatremia which is very disastrous and can result in seizures and coma". While my inflated belly convulsed in spasms, he went on to explain that the body should have a minimum amount of sodium and excess water in the body causes hyponatremia because the absorption of water into the bloodstream can dilute the sodium in the blood." I started feeling giddy, disoriented and developed muscle cramps, all symptoms of that dreaded disease, hyponatremia. I called off my water therapy forthwith and decided not to take water even when thirsty. I would not allow myself to be in the grip of hyponatremia.

My honeymoon with water having ended abruptly, I turned to milk, the best alternative to water. Milk is considered to be a complete food. It has proteins, calcium and vitamins. It is a very important food as it provides optimum nutrition for growth and development. It is good for the development of babies; for strong bones in children and for preventing osteoporosis in women after menopause. The recent research also indicates that milk fat contains potential anti carcinogenic components. It is not for nothing that the Hindu Gods are very fond of milk and milk products!

Having convinced about the richness of milk, I embarked upon milk therapy in right earnest. Milk and milk products became a regular part of my diet. I was immensely enjoying the new therapy when I stumbled upon another research finding which completely debunked the usefulness of milk. The arguments against milk went like this: Milk is white poison. Contrary to common belief, milk does not have iron. It, in fact, blocks absorption of iron from other sources. The ability of the body to absorb calcium from milk is barely 32 per cent as against its ability to absorb 69 per cent from cauliflower and 65 per cent from cabbage. In any case, th human body cannot digest milk because we do not have the enzyme to digest lactose. When we cannot digest milk, there is no question of our absorbing any of its ingredients. Milk has something called IGF-1 and the studies on cancer show that when IGF-1 rises in our body, we get cancer. Milk also causes asthma. The calcium contained in milk becomes a health hazard as the undigested portions of it are deposited in the urinary system and become kidney stones. Drinking milk also causes osteoporosis.

I started sweating. My lips turned dry and pale. I got visions of my being afflicted with diseases ranging from cancer to asthama and kidney failure to osteoporosis because of my past blackdeed of consuming milk. I fried to eject even the last vestige of milk from my body but without success. I vowed no to look at milk thereafter. Could I then take fruit juice as a substitute to water and milk? No; fruit juice does not have fibre and therefore it is as good as useless.



"I started doing exercise regularly."

Leaving water and liquids for good, I turned to solid food. Overeating was toboo. Modernation was the reigning mantra. "The less you eat, the better" was the guiding principle. Though a glutton by nature, I had to make some sacrifices and hence decided to be very frugal in eating and in the process, I got a lean and hungry look like Cassius. Immediately, I realised the folly of taking less quantity of food when I saw yet another recent research report which stated that people who did not take adequate quantity of food would suffer from arorexia nervosa-bulimia.

People obsessed with the 'thinness syndrome' actually suppress a strong urge to eat for fear of becoming fat. General feelings of insecurity, dissatifaction with themselves and obsession with thinness would reduce them from previously happy people to irritable, obstinate and depressed skeletons. The obsessive binge-purge cycle would cause them depression, distress, shame, guilt, self loathing and social isolation. On introspection, I found that I had all the above symptoms: irritability, obstinacy, guilt, shame and depression. I bade good-by to diet control.

My attention then turned to exercise. I started doing exercise regularly. My body should be without any fat or flab. I gave two hoots to all other activities and earnestly got involved in outdoor activities requiring taxing physical exercise. I dreamed of my frail frame turning to a muscle machine which should be the envy of Hercules. Then as usual came the bad news about exercise as well. I came across yet another research finding according to which over-exercising could be detrimental to health causing chronic pain, stress fractures and increased incidence of injuries. People coming in the above category also suffer from an addictive disorder called exercise bulimia. I stopped my exercise then and there.

Perservance being my watchword, I decided to emulate the last peice of advice given by the poet: being cheerful. A born bumpkin and incorrigible introvert, I wanted to change my disposition wholesale by being cheerful and happy at all times. What better way there could be to achieve the above objective than to smile and laugh all the time! So I always wore a smile on my lips. A stage came when I could not be seen without smiling. People started saying unseemly things about me, of course, behind my back. Some of them doubted whether I lost my mental balance altogether. Some well wishers came and consoled; others mustered courage and counselled me to see a good psychologist.

Undeterred but emboldened, I soldiered on fully confident about the correctness of my path. And one day, on an urgent call from boss, I barged into his room with supreme confidence wearing that pleasant and all pervasive smile. The brooding boss greeted me with a stern and contemptuous look. My smile melted away. I was frozen. I realised my misdemeanour of smiling in the presence of my boss without his express permission. My sumo motu smile, however pleasant, unfortunately amounted to nothing less than unbecoming conduct infringing on the relevant provisions of the conduct rules. Considering my grave misconduct, I tendered my sincere and unconditional apologies which, however, went in wilderness. I made a hasty retreat from his room and ran for my life without doing any official business.

All my efforts to gain good health thus ended in a fiasco. An unmitigated disaster, I became delirious, a mental wreck. With my health in jeopardy and career on the rocks, I huddled myself into a corner dejected, disenchanted, dispirited and depressed not knowing what to do. Whether to eat or not, drink or not, exercise or not, laugh or not—that was the question. Was it the above predicament that prompted the Bard to write "To be or not to be?" Without waiting for an answer, I tore up the poem which caused me all the pain. I then recoiled to my old reckless and gluttonous existence and lived happily ever after. ●

"What better way there could be to achieve... than to smile and laugh"

Tabla Maestro
Raj Kumar Majumdar

The Railways are a unique organisation in the country not merely as a promoter of sports, but also numerous other fields including music. In fact Railways have fixed cultural quota for recruitment of artists who have earned encomium in cultural events at national level.

These artists as Railway employees have brought laurels not only for themselves but also for the Railways and the nation. In this galaxy is R.K. Majumdar of Railway Board who joined the Railways as Statistical Assistant in 1989.

Majumdar has a track record of as many as 17 National prizes as a master tabla player and santoorist. Santoor has been of course his recent passion which grew out of an accident that disabled his right arm four years ago. He has played tabla with the national celebrities like Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Kankana Banerjee and Ajay Chakravorty. But then he has also given tabla accompaniment to the master singers like Alka Yagnik, Manhar Udhas, Pinaj Masani, Hariharan and others. In the competitions held at national level he won as many as 13 first awards, enhancing not only his own cultural standing in the country but also the fame of the Railways.

Majumdar was first spotted by the Railway Administration way back in 1983 when in an All India Competition he received the Gold Medal in a tough talent show held in New Delhi. This led to his future links with the Railways which became deeper and closer in a couple of years. "In 1987" he recalls, "I participated in a programme organised by the Northern Railway when the then Railway Minister Shri Madhavrao Scindia was deeply impressed and even suggested me to join the Railways in cultural quota." Majumdar took the heed and within a few months he was recruited against the cultural quota in Railways. He has since been representing Indian Railways in national events including the Inter-Ministry programmes. Notably, in the six programmes that he participated at the ministerial level, he bagged as many as five first awards and made his presence felt in most programmes of AIR and Doordarshan. The turning point which came in 1997 as a santoor player under the guidance of famous santoor player, Pt. Bhajan Sopari. Majumdar's love for santoor has been going spirally upward but then it has not overshadowed his passion for tabla. Eventually Majumdar has a name both for tabla and santoor today.

Majumdar hails from a family that has distinguished itself in the cultural stream of the country. His father Prof. Prashant Majumdar has been the vocalist of national fame since 1930s. He has given performances with the maestros like Ustad Amir Khan, Ali Akbar Khan, Beghum Akhtar, Ustad Vilayat Khan and Pt. Hari Prasad Chaurasia and others. He has been honoured by numerous authorities including the King of Nepal Virender Singh. He is also a lyricist having authored nearly 400 compositions (Nai Bandishes).

Raj Kumar Majumdar playing santoor at Mavalankar auditorium, New Delhi.

Raj Kumar Majumdar traces his lineage to the renowned novelist Sharat Chandra Chatterjee who was maternal uncle of his grand mother. Asked about his impressions about the Railways, he states that the Railway service has in fact brought his talents to the fore which would have otherwise languished like numerous others for want of proper patronage.

Foods That Lower Blood Sugar

Dr H. K. Bakhru

Diabetes is caused by lack of insulin. It is a nutritional disorder characterised by elevated blood glucose and by the excretion of the excess glucose in the urine. It results from an absolute or relative lack of insulin, which leads to abnormalities in carbohydrates metabolism as well as in the metabolism of protein and fat.

Treating Diabetes with Plant Foods

In 1550 B.C., the famous Ebers Papyrus advised treating diabetes with high-fibre wheat grains. Not much has changed since then. Plant foods are still the drug of choice for treating diabetes, but now scientists have much more sound reasons for their effectiveness in this disease. Through the centuries, more than 400 plants have been prescribed as diabetes remedies. Herein are described some of the more important foods which help lower blood sugar or insulin production in diabetes patients.

Bengal Gram

This important pulse in India is of great value as an anti-diabetic food. Tests were conducted at C.F.T.R.I. Laboratories in Mysore, on a chronic diabetic patient whose insulin requirement was 40 units a day. When kept on a diet, which included liberal supplements of Bengal gram extract, the condition of the patient improved considerably and his insulin requirement was reduced to about 20 units per day. Diabetic patients who are on a prescribed diet which does not severely restrict the intake of carbohydrates, but includes liberal amounts of Bengal gram extract, have shown considerable improvement in their fasting blood sugar levels, glucose tolerance, urinary excretion of sugar and general condition.

Bitter Gourd

This common vegetable is specifically used as a folk medicine for diabetes from ancient times in India. Researches by a team of British doctors have established that it contains insulin-like principle, designated as 'plant-insulin', which has been found beneficial in lowering the blood and urine sugar levels. The juice of this vegetable has been found more effective than the fruits. The diabetes patient should take the juice of about three or four fruits every morning on an empty stomach.

Plant insuline contained in bitter gourd helps lower blood sugar in diabetes.

Fenugreek Seeds

Fenugreek seeds are a medicine of great value in the treatment of diabetes. According to research studies conducted at National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, fenugreek seeds, when given in varying doses of 25 grams to 100 grams daily, diminish reactive hyperglycemia in diabetic patients. Levels of glucose were also significantly reduced in the diabetes patients when the seeds were consumed. These studies indicated that the effect of taking fenugreek seeds could be quite marked, when consumed with 1200 to 1400 calorie diet per day, which is usually recommended for diabetes patients.

Fibre-Rich Foods

Foods-rich in fibre are considered highly beneficial in the treatment of diabetes. Whole grain cereals are one of the best sources of dietary fibre. A well-known nutritionist, Denis Burkit in his book 'Don't forget fibre in your diet' says "Diabetes decreases and may even disappear in people eating a traditional whole food diet." According to British Medical Journal issue dated December 25, 1979. "A high fibre diet induced a remission of diabetes in 85 per cent of the patients tested."

Garlic

Garlic or its constituents have been found in scientific trials to lower blood sugar in diabetes. This vegetable is rich in potassium, which effectively replaces potassium, lost in large quantities in the urine by diabeties. It also contains zinc and sulphur, which are constituents of insulin. Garlic also contains manganese, a deficiency of which can contribute towards diabetes. Garlic also prevents atherosclerosis, which is a common complication of diabetes. Diabetics can take the equivalent of one or two clove of garlic a day in their diet in any form they like.

"In 1550 B.C., the famous Ebers Papyrus advised treating diabetes with high-fibre wheat grains. Not much has changed since then. Plant foods are still the drug of choice for treating diabetes."

Indian Gooseberry

Indian gooseberry is an ideal food medicine for diabetes. A tablespoon of its juice, mixed with a cup of fresh bitter gourd juice, taken daily for two months, will stimulate the Islets of Langerhans and enable them to secrete natural insulin. It thus reduces the blood sugar in diabetes. Diet restrictions should be strictly observed while taking this medicine. It will also prevent eye complications in diabetes.

Jambul Fruit

This well-known common fruit in India is regarded in the indigenous system of medicine as a specific against diabetes because of its effect on the pancreas. The fruit, the seeds and fruit juice can all be beneficially used in the treatment of thi disease. The 'jamboline' contained in th seeds is believed to have the power to check the pathological conversion or starch into sugar in cases of increased production of glucose. The seeds are dried and powdered. This powder, mixed with water, should be taken thr or four times daily. It reduces the quantity of sugar in urine and allays t unquenchable thirst.

"Fenugreek seeds are a medicine of great value in the treatment of diabetes. According to research studies conducted at National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, fenugreek seeds, when given in varying doses of 25 grams to 100 grams daily, diminish reactive hyperglycemia in diabetic patients."

Kidney Bean or French Bean

Beans are high in carbohydrate and fibre. They should be eaten liberally to keep diabetes away and under control. Kidney or French beans are especially valuable in diabetes. A decoction prepare from this bean is an excellent medicine for diabetes. The procedure is to drink th decoction of French bean pods, one glass every two hours during the day. This decoction is prepared by boiling 60 gram of fresh kidney bean pods, after removal of the seeds, in four litres of water on a slow fire for four hours. It should then be strained through a fine muslin cloth and allowed to stand for eight hours. The decoction must be made fresh every day, as it loses its medicinal value after 24 hours.

Onion

Onions have been used as a treatment for diabetes since ancient times. Research studies conducted in Modern times have proved that this pungent vegetable can lower blood sugar in diabetes. In recent investigation in India, Research scientist fed subjects onion juice and whole onions in doses of 25 to 200 grams and found that the greater the dose, the more the blood sugar decrease. Its make no difference whether the onion was eaten in raw or cooked form. The investigators found that the onions affect the liver's metabolism of glucose, or release of insulin, or prevent insulin's destruction. ●

Readers Write

Suggestion

Sir,

I am a subscriber (No. 2427) of the esteemed "INDIAN RAILWAYS" since May 1994. It is so fascinating to read the magazine, that I invariably read it completely on the first day of receipt. Given an option, I would like to go for its life-time subscription.

There has been a lot of improvement in issues of "INDIAN RAILWAYS" in the period of over six years of its subscription. Congratulations! and thank you sir. Special feature of railway divisions in various issues is very informative. It is most welcome if every issue of "INDIAN RAILWAYS" has a special feature on Railway Divisions, important railway projects or any other topic on railways. Article on "Controlling Speed Differential to Improve Train Mobility" (August 2000 issue) is highly informative and thought provoking. Concept of running the trains on "Shadow Path" along with automatic signalling to safely run trains at close spacing seems to be the best techno-economic solution for Railways' problems of line capacity with very limited financial resources. "Rail Quiz" is also very interesting and informative.

New regular feature of "Readers Write" is a welcome column. Today Indian Railways are opening up and allowing private sector participation in its various activities like rolling stock, tourism, catering, telecom, station and commercial property development etc. This will call for more and more availability of information about Indian Railways to the people. I feel it is time to go ahead with regular articles like : (1) "Readers Ask" (2) "Readers Suggest".

These features have potential of becoming a useful information or input for making future policy decisions for Indian Railways. Moreover such measures will certainly increase the popularity of "INDIAN RAILWAYS" magazine.

Finally, I suggest you to publish a detailed article on the present Computer Passenger Reservation System: its networking, features/options available for making reservations etc. It will make a good sense as daily a few lakh tickets are sold in Indian Railways.

Sanjay Agarwal
(M/s. Laxminarayan Nathmal & Co.)
Pin-491001.

Congratulation

Sir,

First of all I'd like to congratulate the Railway Ministry for bringing out "INDIAN RAILWAYS" magazine focussing exclusively on Railways at an economical price. It is a wonderful magazine, but, there's scope of improvement to make it a better magazine from being a good one.

First as Railways have a large network, if this magazine is available at big stalls its circulation will become manifold and will attract more advertisements.

Another point to consider is to have a proper subscription form in the magazine itself so as to induce readers and making it convinient for people to subscribe.

Last but not the least along with technical data if more of facts, interesting data, and useful national are published it will attract more readers (As was your Darjeeling Railways cover story, Dec. 2000).

Gaurav Nakra
A-6/3, Mianwali Nagar, Rohtak Road,
New Delhi-110087.

Ooty Railway

Sir,

It was indeed a matter of joy and pride to learn that World Heritage status was accorded to Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway. As one who has travelled many times on this exciting section during his years in N-East India, I had nostalgic recollections.

Why don't you attempt a feature on the Mettuppalayam-Ooty railway which is unique in the country, bearing close resemblance to Darjeeling-Himalayan but differing in certain particulars like the toothed wheel in rack and pinion arrangement?

Ooty railway in Nilgiris has her only cousin in Switzerland. It is so unique in Asia and outside Europe. The quaint little stations with evocative names like 'Runny-mede', 'Lovedale', 'Hillgrove', perched beautifully on hill sides delight you as they slowly glide by. A contrast is provided by its engine fitted at the rear.

All told, it is a marvellous feat of engineering in an extremely beautiful part of our country that deserves to be highlighted and preserved for posterity as a precious heritage. Kindly do a feature.

R.N. Pillai
Station Director (Retd.)
'Tusita', Chalapuram,
Calicut-673 002, Kerala.

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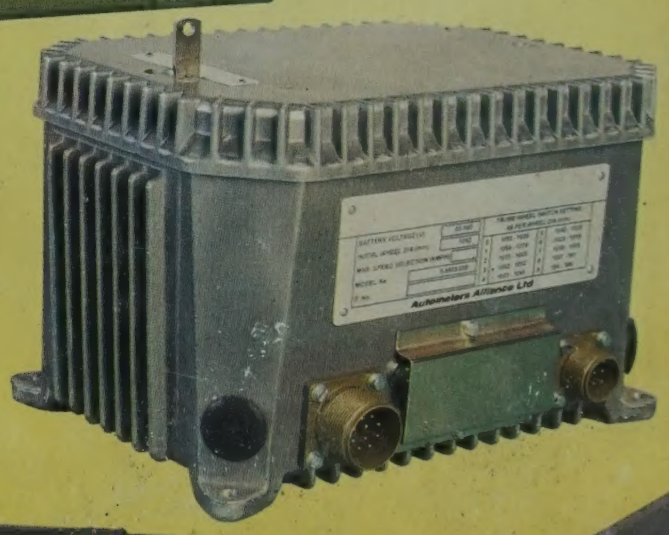

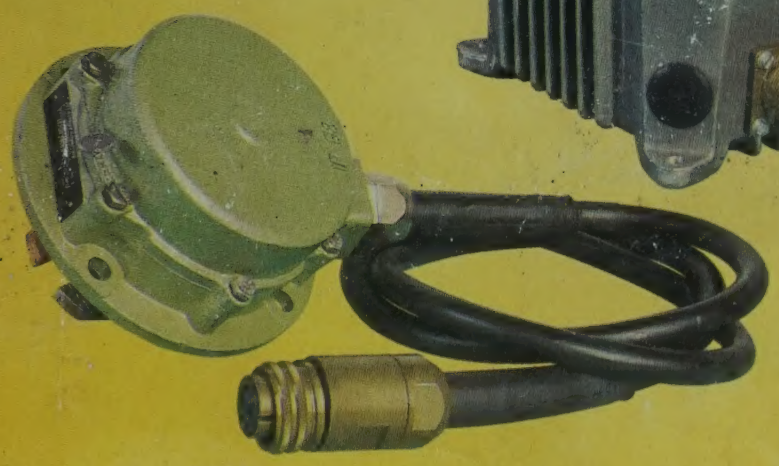

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